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Palestinian court jails Jenin kidnappers

JENIN (R) — Two men convicted of kidnapping two Israeli soldiers this week were on Saturday jailed for nine years with hard labour by a military court in the West Bank Palestinian self-rule enclave of Jenin. "You disturbed our relations with Israel. You kidnapped Israeli soldiers despite the Palestinian (National) Authority (PNA) being in charge," the court's verdict read. Israel froze its handover of West Bank towns to the PNA for one day after the kidnapping of the two soldiers in Jenin on Wednesday by Jamal Abu Rub and Ahmad Samarah. The two snatched the soldiers in retaliation for Israel trying the same night to arrest a Fateh man in nearby Qabatiyeh. Mr. Samarah and Mr. Abu Rub are members of the Black Panthers, a militant group affiliated with the Fateh faction. Palestinian security forces negotiated the soldiers' release. The Fateh man wanted by Isreal surrendered to Palestinian forces and was returned to Jericho where, under an Israeli prisoner release agreement, he was to have stayed.

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King, in speech to Parliament, voices resolve to build peace and confront those who use democracy to fight democracy

Fresh concepts and standards needed for new era in region
Media should enhance own role in a spirit of responsibility
People of Iraq have right to dignified life in freedom, justice

By P. V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday opened the third regular session of the 12th Parliament with a reaffirmation of Jordan's resolve to build on the state of peace in the Middle East and a strong warning against using the Kingdom's democracy as a means to fight democracy itself.

The King, in a traditional Speech from the Throne at the opening of Parliament's annual four-month session, pledged that the government would continue the economic path it has been following and seek to strengthen the national economy in partnership with the international community.

The Monarch, addressing the joint session of the 40-member Upper House (Senate) and the 80-member Lower House, called on the Jordanian media to enhance their role in a spirit of responsible freedom and away from abusing the freedom the media enjoy in the Kingdom.

The King, in full uniform as the supreme commander of the Jordanian Armed Forces, paid high tribute to the Kingdom's security forces and military and pledged that the government would provide them with advanced means to fulfill their duties in the country's defence.

"My government will extend every support to our Armed Forces and security departments by providing state-of-the-art weaponry that will enable them to carry out their noble duties efficiently and with distinction," the King told the session, which was attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, other members of the royal family, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and his Cabinet and a large number of prominent citizens.

On other issues, the King told the lawmakers gathered in the refurbished Parliament House that Jordan would continue to seek to build better inter-Arab relations and contribute to Arab development.

He said Jordan would also exert continued efforts to lift the five-year-old international sanctions "against the people of Iraq who have never thought twice about fulfilling their duty towards their nation, in whose defence they made a great sacrifice." "We firmly believe that it is their right to enjoy a free and dignified life within the framework of freedom, democracy and justice," said the King in the address, which was broadcast live on Jordan Television and Radio.

Warning those who abuse the democratic atmosphere in Jordan, the King said: "Democracy does not mean anarchy or transgressing the country's law and order. Nor does it mean harming national unity, denigrating every accomplishment, and assassinating the good reputation of our country and people."

It was an implicit reference to some of Jordan's professional associations and unions, which have been accused by the government of misusing their powers and trying to serve political objectives away from their mandate."

"We will continue to observe this phenomenon which fight democracy in the

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Srour reelected unopposed; centrists win all House posts

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Centrist lawmakers on Saturday won all seats of the Lower House of Parliament's Permanent Bureau, defeating rival candidates despite a strong showing by the opposition, with at least 10 more deputies voting in its favour than usual.

Incumbent Speaker Sa'ad Hayel Srour retained his seat by acclamation after the Islamic Action Front bloc, which had insisted on fielding Deputy Abdullah Akaileh, abstained from nominating a candidate for the post.

Centrist Abdul Baqi Jammo, the oldest serving member in Parliament and who was fielded by the Al Ahd-led National Action Front bloc, won the seat of first deputy by 43 votes against his rival Islamist Deputy Abdul Rahim Ekour, who secured 33 votes. There was one blank vote.

The post of second deputy was won by centrist Mohammad Thoueb, who beat leftist Khalil Haddadin by 44 to 32 votes. One vote was blank.

Mr. Thoueb was backed by the National Front bloc led by Deputy Prime Minister Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh.

Centrist deputies Mohammad Huneiti and Salem Zawaideh won the posts of two assistants to the speaker, beating their only rival Fawwaz Zou'bi.

Seventy-seven deputies were present in Saturday's session; independent Deputy Ibrahim Shahdeh and Islamist deputies Abdullah Akaileh and Hammam Sa'eed were absent.

Shortly after the elections, opposition deputies contended that the four-month regular session would witness closer interaction among deputies, particularly between the opposition and independent deputies.

The government "committed a terrible mistake," Islamist Deputy Ahmmad Kasasbeh said. "We tried to reach a deal over the House's Permanent Bureau but they (the government) refused. (Apparently) they aim at isolating the opposition."

Mr. Kasasbeh asserted that more votes would have gone to the opposition had His Majesty King Hussein shown more leniency towards the opposition in his speech made in the opening session. Mr. Kasasbeh said he believed that some deputies were influenced by the speech, which made several references to the democratic process in Jordan.

"Our democratic process has now taken root and has become a remarkable model commended by our friends and envied by those who bode us well," the King said. But "democracy does not

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Malaysian leader meets Prince Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR (Petra) — Sultan Tinko Abdul Rahman of Malaysia on Saturday received His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah, currently visiting Malaysia. Prince Abdullah conveyed a message from His Majesty King Hussein to the Malaysian monarch concerning bilateral relations and ways to enhance them. The Malaysian King gave a similar message to Prince Abdullah addressed to King Hussein.

Settlers shoot at W. Bank homes

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Five Jewish settlers shot at homes in the village of Urif south of the West Bank town of Nablus on Saturday, Urif residents said. They said no one was hurt and only one house sustained damage.

Israel 'copters attack Hizbollah bases

MASHGARAH (AFP) — Two Israeli Cobra helicopter gunships fired missiles at Hizbollah positions in the Bekaa Valley, the organisation said. The helicopters unleashed four missiles and raked the area with machinegun fire as the guerrillas shot back.

GCC ministers prepare summit

MUSCAT (AFP) — Foreign ministers from the six Gulf Arab states opened talks here Saturday to prepare the organisation's 16th summit which begins Monday, officials said. The Gulf Cooperation Council groups Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and Oman. The fight against terrorism and the embargo against Iraq will be among the key topics discussed.

Saudi prince's guards jailed

CAIRO (AFP) — A court on Saturday jailed two bodyguards of King Fahd's brother for three months after they beat up two Egyptians in a case which caused fury here. Interior Minister Hassan Al Alfi ordered that the American and Frenchman be expelled and permanently barred from Egypt after their release.

France, Jordan sign military accord

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — France and Jordan on Saturday signed an agreement on military cooperation that envisages joint exercises and training programmes as well as French technical assistance to the Kingdom's Armed Forces.

The agreement was signed by French Defence Minister Charles Millon, who began a two-day visit to Jordan on Saturday, and Prime Minister and Defence Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker at the Prime Ministry after a round of talks.

Mr. Millon, who was later received by His Majesty King Hussein at the Royal Court, told reporters at the Prime Ministry that the agreement provides for "strengthening consultation, training (military personnel) and cooperation in joint exercises and manoeuvres."

Precise details of the agreement, the first of its kind between France and Jordan, were not immediately available. French Ambassador Bernard Bajolet recently told an informal press briefing that the accord was a broad framework "encompassing different aspects of cooperation."

Mr. Bajolet, who attended the signing along with a delegation accompanying Mr. Millon, said the accord included a separate annex for joint military exercises.

Jordan has 31 French-built Mirage aircraft and a French team offers regular maintenance to the aircraft.

In 1989, Jordan was forced to cancel a nearly $1 billion Mirage deal with France when it found itself under heavy financial difficulties.

Ambassador Bajolet described the accord signed on Saturday as a "reflection of our solidarity with Jordan and French willingness to give more substance to our relationship in defence."

Jordan has a long-standing agreement with the United States on military cooperation, and the armed forces of the two countries have conducted regular joint exercises, the last in August.

Mr. Millon said the issue of French military sales to Jordan was not discussed at the Prime Ministry meeting, which covered a review of "the situation in the Middle East as well as international affairs."

France "appreciates the role of Jordan and King Hussein" in the Middle East peace process, said Mr. Millon.

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His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday presents the Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order to French Defence Minister Charles Millon (photo by Yousef Allan)

PNA refuses guaranteed seats for women in self-rule council

GAZA CITY (Agencies) — Palestinian leaders on Saturday rejected a proposal to guarantee seats for women in the self-rule council to be elected next month but agreed to reserve places for the Christian minority, officials said.

The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Yasser Arafat which brought together the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Executive Committee, Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and opposition figures to discuss the draft election law for the poll scheduled for Jan. 20.

The Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, and the Popular Front for the Liberate of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) represented the opposition, while Islamic Jihad was absent.

The final version of the law was expected to be approved overnight.

International Cooperation Minister Nabil Shaath said that the participants had rejected a proposal to reserve seats for women in the 82-member autonomy council.

"The question of seats for women has been resolved," he said. "There won't be any. We shall allocate no special seats for groups, apart from Christians from Jerusalem, Ramallah and Bethlehem."

It was up to the Palestinian parties to nominate women candidates so that some could be elected, he said.

Mr. Arafat's main Fateh faction of the PLO "will nominate 16 women amongst its candidates. We call on the other parties to do the same."

There are around 75,000 Palestinian Christians concentrated on the West Bank, mostly in East Jerusalem and Bethlehem, accounting for almost half the population of the latter.

Saeb Erakat, Palestinian minister responsible for the elections, said many amendments had been proposed since the first draft.

"There will be a lot of changes in the election law but the date remains the same. The elections will take place on January 20," he said.

Economy Minister Ahmad Qourea added "there was a consensus that we hold the elections without delay on the scheduled date, that is Jan. 20."

It will be the first time Palestinians will vote in their own general election.

Two parallel votes will be held — to choose the self-rule council, and to elect the president of an executive to be drawn from the council.

Some 890,000 Palestinians

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King Fahd is doing well – Prince Saud

Combined agency dispatches

SAUDI ARABIA'S King Fahd, who has been hospitalised since Thursday, is in "good health," Foreign Minister Prince Saud Al Faisal told the official UAE news agency on Saturday.

The prince, speaking on arrival in Muscat for a meeting of Gulf foreign ministers, added that a statement on the king's health would be issued in Riyadh on Sunday.

The 73-year-old king, who suffers from diabetes, has officially been undergoing "routine medical tests" in the Saudi capital since being admitted to hospital at dawn Thursday.

Arab diplomats in Riyadh said late Friday that he had suffered a heart attack, but there was no confirmation from Saudi Arabia.

"Praise be to God, the medical tests are reassuring," the king wrote in a message to King Hussein, which was published by the Saudi press on Saturday.

A royal statement has said simply the tests showed the king "was in good health."

No explanation has been given of what kind of tests King Fahd is undergoing, and there have been no television or radio broadcasts showing him in the hospital.

Several other Arab and world leaders have inquired after the king's health, including Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, Spain's King Juan Carlos, and former U.S. President George Bush and former Secretary of State James Baker.

"We have heard a lot of rumours and speculation but nothing has been confirmed," a Western diplomat in Riyadh contacted from Dubai in the United Arab Emirates said, asking to remain anonymous. "Everything here is normal except for the rain."

He said a good indicator of the king's health would be whether he took part in the three-day summit of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) due to open Monday in Muscat.

A statement by the Omani court on Saturday dropping the usual reference to "their majesties" attending the summit was an indication King Fahd might not attend, political sources said.

The statement reported by the Omani News Agency did not spell out the names of the leaders who would be attending the summit.

It was worded: "Official welcoming ceremonies will be held for their highnesses the leaders of council states, where His Majesty Sultan Qaboos Ben Said... will be on hand to receive his brothers, their highnesses the leaders of the council states."

King Fahd was due to head Riyadh's delegation to the annual summit of the six-nation GCC, which Saudi Arabia leads.

The sources pointed out that the Omani statement would have normally stated; "Their majesties and their highnesses the leaders of the council state," if King Fahd was to attend.

The sources said the kingdom was likely to be represented in Muscat by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah.

Saudi television said the Lebanese and Sudanese presidents telephoned to inquire after the health of the King.

Saudi officials told Reuters on Friday that King Fahd was still in hospital, but could not say when he would be discharged.

Although little has been disclosed publicly about King Fahd's health, he is known to suffer from diabetes. He is overweight and uses a walking stick for relief from a

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Russia 'is not dropping Syria'

BEIRUT (R) — Russia's military cooperation agreement with Israel does not mean it is abandoning its ties with Syria or other Arab countries, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Posavalyuk said on Saturday.

Speaking during a brief visit to Beirut, Mr. Posavalyuk said the accord Russian Defence Minister Pavel Grachev signed in Tel Aviv with Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres on Friday did not conflict with Russia's relations with Arab countries.

"We have not abandoned Syria and we have strong relations with her as we also have had military cooperation for a long time," Mr. Posavalyuk said in reply to questions at a news conference.

"We have agreements that call for military cooperation with many Arab countries. I don't see any contradiction. We have been saying that

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Bosnia accord under challenge

Combined agency dispatches

THE PEACE agreement signed last month by the leaders of ex-Yugoslavia appeared to hit serious snags on Saturday, but the United States, which mediated the accord, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) signalled their determination to press ahead with the implementation of the deal.

Bosnian Serb army commander General Ratko Mladic rejected the U.S.-brokered peace deal, saying some of it would have to be renegotiated.

In his first comment on the pact, agreed last week in Dayton, Ohio, Gen. Mladic was quoted by the Bosnian Serb news agency SRNA as saying: "Serbs cannot agree with the Dayton maps, under which some territories in which Serbs have lived for centuries have been handed over to the Croat-Muslim coalition."

Gen. Mladic told Serb troops in Vlasenica, eastern Bosnia, that a better solution had to be found for some disputed territories, particularly Serb suburbs of Sarajevo which are due to come under Muslim-Croat rule.

"We are warning that we cannot let our people live under butchers' rule, and a just solution, especially for Sarajevo, must be found."

U.S. peace negotiators have already ruled out any renegotiation of the Dayton accord making Bosnia a single republic divided into a Muslim-Croat federation and a separate Serb state, which is due to be signed in Paris on Dec. 14.

Gen. Mladic did not take part in peace talks in Dayton, since he and the Bosnian Serb "president," Radovan Karadzic, have been indicted for war crimes by an international tribunal in the Hague and would have been liable to arrest.

It was Gen. Mladic's first comment on the accord, and his first reported appearance in public since the initialling of the agreement of Nov. 21.

The president of the Croat-

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq says U.N. barred Russian medical plane

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said on Friday a committee enforcing U.N. sanctions had prevented a Russian plane from taking a shipment of medicines to Baghdad.

"The Sanctions Committee has prevented the flight of a special plane from Russia which was due to traosport some badly needed medicines to Baghdad last Friday," Health Minister Umeed Madhat Mubarak was quoted by Iraq's official news agency INA as saying.

Mr. Mubarak said Iraq did not know why the committee had barred the flight and that contacts were being made to allow the plane to bring the medicines.

Iraq is under an air embargo and strict trade sanctions, including a ban on its oil exports, since its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organisation said on Friday that the U.N. sanctions had been responsible for the death of more than 560,000 children since the Gulf war ended in 1991.

Dr. Mubarak said Bahrain was sending medicines worth $30,000 to Iraq through the International Committee of the Red Cross and a shipment of medicines from Egypt was on its way.

Red Crescent societies of the United Emirates and Algeria were also sending medicines, he said.

But the medical aid Iraq was receiving irregular and insufficient, Dr. Mubarak added.

He said Iraq used to import $500 million worth of medicines a year and a Security Council offer to Iraq of a one-time oil sale to pay for urgent humanitarian needs would not cover Baghdad's needs.

Baghdad has turned down the offer, saying its terms violates Iraq's sovereignty.

Last week an official source at the Health Ministry said that Iraq was in urgent need of drugs worth $200 million to treat patients suffering from chronic diseases.

"The Ministry of Health has confirmed that the number of people suffering from chronic diseases like heart ailment, diabetes and cancer exceeds 600,000," the source was quoted by the official Al Iraq daily newspaper. "They need life-saving drugs worth $200 million annually."

Cholera kills three

Three people have died in northern Iraq from a cholera outbreak suspected to have affected 519 people, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said.

The outbreak, which began last month, seemed to be under control, according to experts at the U.N. agency.

It said that at the request of Iraq's Health Ministry a WHO consultant had been in the Sulaimaniyeh region in northern Iraq, where all of the known cases were located, for the past week.

"In his initial report, he said the situation was under control and the outbreak was not spreading at a dramatic speed. It is confined and the number of cases is dropping each day," Maria Neira, coordinator of WHO's cholera programme, told Reuters.

Only 264 cases of the 519 suspected cases had been confirmed, according to the WHO's weekly epidemiological bulletin.

The Geneva-based agency said it had made available essential supplies for treating cholera, an infectious and often fatal bacterial disease with severe intestinal symptoms.

The Iraqi News Agency reported on Thursday Iraq was taking measures to contain the spread of cholera.

The agency quoted Health Minister Mubarak as saying the authorities have succeeded in preventing cholera from spreading outside of northern Iraq, home to some four million Kurds.

Dr. Mubarak called for strict measures to prevent cholera from spreading outside of the region.

Group reports killings, torture in Mogadishu

MOGADISHU (AFP) — A Somali clan has catalogued a wave of human rights violations in the Somali capital, saying its members are frequently tortured or killed by rival groups holding power in the north and south of the city.

Ibrahim Mohammad Dirie, a spokesman for the Somali African Muki Organisation (SAMO), the Jareer clan's political organisation, told reproters that its members had been tortured and killed by General Mohammad Farah Aideed's Habr Gedir clan which controls southern Mogadishu.

They were subjected to "killings, torture, harrassments and degradations" in the south of the capital, he claimed, accusing Aideed's supporters of sponsoring the worst human rights violations in Somalia.

He quoted as examples Hussein Bashir, beaten to death after being tortured for nine days, Ali Yousef Hussein, who was castrated and Hussein Ibrahim Hassan who was beaten and hung upside down from a tree with his hands tied.

Mr. Hussein told repofters that during his interrogation, militiamen of Gen. Aideed's Somali Congress/Somali National Alliance (USC/SNA) poured corrosive acid onto his genitals and used a pestle to crush his testicles.

Sheikh Jama Haji Hussein, a Jareer serving in Gen. Aideed's governmeot as labour minister, visited Hassan in hospital but made no comment despite being visibly shocked, apparently for his own security, nurses said.

Mr. Hassan has been put in a solitary ward where reporters have not been allowed to interview him, but his relatives said Friday that it was impossible he could have stolen 50 barrels of fuel as charged.

Hassan Mohammad Nur, who was freed by USC/SNA militiamen after relatives paid a 300,000-Somali shilling ($45) ransom, lost use of his arms after being tortured in a building next to the presidential palace of late Somali dictator Mohammad Siad Barre.

Lebanese minister slams Beirut port management

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's Transport Minister Omar Miskawi has accused the Beirut port administration of incompetence and corruption and said it was controlled by former civil war militias.

He said the Shiite Muslim movement Amal, a former militia led by Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, the pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) fighting Israeli troops in South Lebanon, and the Lebanese Forces, a banned former militia, each controlled part of the unions and port administration.

"Everybody has a share... Amal has a share, Hizbollah has a share and the former Lebanese Forces militia has a share as well," the conservative Beirut daily Al Nahar quoted Mr. Miskawi as saying.

As transport minister, Mr. Miskawi has responsibility for the port of Beirut which is the main gateway for Lebanon's trade.

His angry statement followed a six-day strike by the 2,500 dockers that paralysed the port in protest at his failure to approve a pay agreement workers reached with management last June.

Mr. Miskawi, whose remarks were published oo Thursday, withdrew his charge against Hizbollah on Friday, saying he had since learned that the Muslim fundamentalist movement had oo representative in the port's unions.

However, he did not retract his charges against the other ex-militias or the port administration and staff.

"The present administration is not capable of managing the place or exerting any control on the forces on the ground... its weaknesses have led to a mutiny by the powers on the ground, and the government's concern has boiled down to pleasing these forces," he said.

He accused the committee of failing to make a worthwhile effort to develop or modernise the port and of wasting 420 million Lebanese pounds ($262,500) on endless research on development of the fourth basin.

Mr. Miskawi also accused dockers and port employees of ripping off the treasury: "Many of them have been paid overtime hours which they actually spent at home, and their salaries have become the highest io Mediterranean ports."

He said the committee was bribed to grant port contracts.

"I did not believe allegations about commissions being paid by the contractors, until the agent of one contracting company came out and offered me a share," Mr. Miskawi said.

A $54 million European Investment Bank (EIB) loan granted in November 1993 to upgrade the fourth basin had not been used because the port committee could not agree on a contractor to do the job, Mr. Miskawi said.

"They have been deliberating for the past three years with no result, although the door was opened for international bidders to submit their bids," he said.

'Shammas bought drugs'

BEIRUT (R) — A Turkish illegal immigrant in jail for forgery told a Beirut court on Saturday that a Lebanese parliamentary deputy on trial for drug smuggling twice bought consignments of morphine from him.

Aziz Ayaz said Deputy Yahya Shammas paid $350,000 for 50 kilogrammes of morphine in 1990 and later bought another 100 kilogrammes but did not pay. Mr. Ayaz also said he once paid Mr. Shamas, a deputy from the eastern Bekaa Valley that was an illicit drugs haven during Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war, $50,000 to get a friend released from jail in Syria.

Mr. Shammas was arrested in November 1994 after parliament voted to lift his immunity.

He is charged with possessing, processing, smuggling and dealing drugs and faces a possible seven years in jail.

He denied Mr. Ayaz's allegations and asked him if he made them because he was under a threat of being sent to jail in Turkey for seven years if he did not.

Mr. Ayaz, who said he was telling the truth, said he had fled Turkey for political reasons. He is serving a one-year jail sentence for forging a Lebanese passport and using a false name.

Mr. Shammas is the first Lebanese MP tried on drugs charges. He has denied the charges and told parliament before his arrest that his troubles with the law began after a row with Brigadier Ghazi Kanaan, Syria's top army intelligence officer in Lebanon.

Egyptian army tries 23 militants

CAIRO (R) — Twenty-three suspected militants went on trial in an Egyptian military court on Saturday charged with belonging to an illegal group and possession of arms, explosives and detonators.

The defendants, known as Al Aedoon Min Al Sudan (returnees from Sudan), were arrested in June while trying to reenter Egypt and are allegedly members of the violent group Gamaa Al Islamiyah.

The judge referred all the defendants to have medical check-ups after their lawyers complained they had been held in solitary confinement and tortured.

Official Egyptian newspapers said in October the men had identified would-be assassins of President Hosni Mubarak and confessed they were trained in Sudan by prominent fugitive militant leader, Mostafa Hamza.

The men were arrested in possession of 168 automatic rifles and 96 bombs, court officials said.

The indictment said they had "entered Egypt from Sudan with the aim of committing attacks."

"They were given martial arts training in Sudan, in the same camp as the fundamentalist group" which carried out the failed assassination bid on President Mubarak, it said.

They all face the death penalty if found guilty by the high military court here.

The government's Al Ahram newspaper said the 23 were able to identify from photographs those who tried to kill Mr. Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June because they had met them before at a training camp in southern Khartoum.

The militants on trial said Sudan provided them with a training camp, a special plane to facilitate their internal movements and apartments in Khartoum, Al Ahram said in October.

The Egyptian Interior Ministry has twice in the past month accused Sudanese officials on the border of helping Egyptian militants reenter the country to carry out violent acts.

Sudan has denied involvement in the assassination attempt and rejected accusations that it shelters Egyptian militants.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Arafat spokesman slams New York mayor

GAZA (R) — Yasser Arafat's spokesman on Saturday slammed comments by New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani who said he was proud of evicting the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader from a concert performance during the U.N.'s 50th birthday celebrations. "It seems that Mr. Giuliani is not living in this world and he has no idea what is going on," Arafat spokesman Marwan Kanafani said. "Such persons have no importance in this world and his opinion does not deserve response or respect." Mr. Giuliani ejected Mr. Arafat from a packed performance in October of Beethoven's 9th symphony at the Lincoln Centre for the Performing Arts. Mr. Arafat, along with Cuban President Fidel Castro, was excluded from all city-sponsored events marking the U.N.'s anniversary, including the mayor's opening night dinner. "Not only do I not regret it, I'm proud of it," Mr. Giuliani told reporters on Friday. "What I did to Mr. Arafat I believe in, I'd do it again. Yasser Arafat is a terrorist, a criminal and a murderer."

11 killed in crash in Egyptian mist

CAIRO (AFP) — Eleven people were killed and 12 injured when a lorry and a minibus collided in dawn mist on a desert road between Cairo and the northern Mediterranean port of Alexandria, the daily Al Gomhouriya said Saturday. The accident happened at dawn Friday when the minibus carrying building site workers hurtled into the back of the lorry. The injured, some of whom were seriously hurt, were admitted to nearby hospitals, the paper added.

Iran to send home Afghans via Turkmenistan

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran is to restart next month repatriating tens of thousands of Afghan refugees through Turkmenistan under U.N. supervision, the official news agency IRNA reported Saturday. The move is part of an agreement signed here Saturday between representatives from Iran, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), it said. The UNHCR has "committed to provide the necessary facilities for the return fo the refugees' strting next year, IRNA said. About 250,000 refugees from northern Afghanistan, bordering Turkmenistan, could be affected by the agreement. Iran for its part has pledged to help "urgently resolve the refugees' legal and financial problems," it said without elaborating. A large repatriation programme carried out over the past two years by Tehran with the UNHCR's help has been virutally suspended, although some 1.4 million Afghans who fled after their country was invaded by the Soviet army in 1979 still live in the country. Despite the ongoing civil war in Afghanistan, over two million refugees have left Iran since the fall of the communist regime in Kabul in 1992, including 550,000 with UNHCR assistance. Iranian authorities suspended the direct repatriation of refugees after the fall of three western provinces bordering Iran to the Taliban militia in early September and border region clashes.

UAE pardons 113 prisoners for national holiday

DUBAI (AFP) — The president of the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, on Saturday pardoned 113 prisoners to mark the 24th anniversary of the creation of the state, the official agency WAM said. Senior prison official Yacub Manai told AFP those amnestied had been mainly sentenced for theft and counterfeiting. But he did not rule out that others sentenced for murder who had been forgiven by their victim's relatives could also be freed. The UAE was created out of the seven Gulf states of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Um Al Qiwain, Ral Al Khaima and Fejeirah after the withdrawal of British forces from the territory.

Greek lawmakers target Germany on Kurds

ATHENS (AFP) — Five Greek lawmakers, in a statement released in Athens on Saturday, accused Germany of supporting what they called Turkey's "dirty war" against the Kurds. The politicians, including two from the ruling socialist PASOK party, urged Bonn to suspend all military, economic and political aid to Turkey "which is being used for genocide against the Kurds." They also demanded that Germany put pressure on Ankara to open a dialogue with the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party, which has been fighting since 1984 to set up a Kurdish homeland in southeast Turkey. The conflict has left more than 21,000 dead. The group of give lawmakers, which also includes two conservatives and a neo-nationalist, met the leaders of the Kurdish Labour Party, Abdullah Ocalan, in June. Ankara, which regularly accuses Athens of siding with the Kurds, reacted with anger to the meeting.

Iran to allow visit by rights representative

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran said Saturday it would allow the U.N. to send a representative to examine the country's human rights situation, but it warned in advance that any reports prepared must be based on "facts." Chief Justice Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi said the government had accepted a request in August by the new head of the U.N. Human Rights Commission to visit Iran. The last visit to Iran by a U.N. human rights rapporteur was almost four years ago, when the former head of the U.N. commission, Reynaldo Galindo Pohl, made a trip here and wrote a report critical of the rights situation in Iran. He has since been denied a visa. Iranian authorities have accused Galindo Pohl of being biased against the Tehran government and relying on "false" information provided by Iranian opposition groups in preparing his report.

Arab-Americans support U.S. military role to keep Bosnia peace

WASHINGTON (USIA) — At a press conference in Washington, a group of Arab Americans announced their support for President Clinton's plan to send 20,000 U.S. troops to Bosnia as part of the NATO peacekeeping force following the signing of the Dayton peace accords in Paris on Dec. 14.

"We feel there is no other choice. The President made the right choice and we will support him," said James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute (AAI).

Mr. Zogby described the president's proposal as "a courageous but risky move (because) nothing can be guaranteed in Bosnia." He added that his organisation's endorsement is being made on behalf of a variety of ethnic and religious groups throughout the United States and includes Americans of Eastern European and Jewish origins.

All these groups agree that "to preserve democracy, create peace and support human rights and freedom is critical and in the post-cold war world is desperately needed," Mr. Zogby said.

"The shrill cries of isolationism are wrong," Mr. Zogby declared. "They cannot stand. What is at stake here is far too much to allow us to shrivel back to our borders and deny America's role in the world."

The Dec. 1 press conference was held at the Washington headquarters of its co-sponsor, the American Muslim Council (AMC). According to Abdurahman Alamoudi, AMC's Executive Director, io Bosnia-Herzegovina, "all parties... have set aside their differences and decided that the cost of war is much higher than the cost of peace."

In a statement issued by both leaders, they noted, "The alternative to this peace is an unthinkable return to a devastating and possibly expanding war... the (United States) has provided leadership and for that we are thankful and supportive. We will mobilise our constituencies and all Americans to work to support the president's plan."

In conjunction with the press confereoce, Khaled Saffuri, director of the American Task Force for Bosnia, a coalition of various ethnic religious groups in the U.S., announced that on December 5, his organisation will deliver a statement to all members of Congress requesting that U.S. troops be sent to Bosnia to help secure an enduring peace.

Following is the text of the draft statement to Congress by the American Task Force for Bosnia:

Dear Member of Congress:

Last week, in America's heartland, an agreement was signed to end four years of aggression in Europe's heartland. American resolve and leadership have moved once intractable enemies to the peace table in different parts of the world. In the Middle East, an American-brokered accord has placed Israel, the Palestinians and her Arab neighbours on the road to peace. In Haiti, American diplomacy and American arms have secured a peaceful resolution of that conflict.

And in Bosnia, the tireless efforts of the Clinton administration have brought the war-torn region closer to peace.

The American Task Force for Bosnia stands in support of the peace accord reached in Dayton, Ohio, and firmly supports the Clinton administration's decision to send American troops to participate with NATO forces to implement the peace agreement. Essential to the success of the Dayton accord is the introduction of NATO forces to oversee the ceasefire agreement. Without NATO forces on the ground in Bosnia to ensure implementation of the Dayton agreement, the four year war in Bosnia would continue unabated.

Under the agreemeot signed by Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia, Franjo Tudjman of Croatia and Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia (to be formally signed in Paris in mid-December), Bosnia's bloody conflict can draw to a close. In summary, the peace agreement calls for (1) the disengagement of the warring parties and the establishment of a Constitution that calls for the election of a central government consisting of a group presidency and a bicameral legislature, and (2) the creation of separate governments for Bosnians and Serbs in entities created by the Dayton agreement. Elected officials at all levels of government will be chosen through internationally supervised elections. In addition, the accord calls for the peacekeeping force under NATO command. With a U.S. general heading the force, to monitor the ceasefire and control Bosnian air space. The refugees displaced by the war be allowed to return to their homes or seek compensation.

For two long the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina have suffered the atrocities of war.

In four bloody years, 250,000 people have died and 2 billion people have been displaced in Bosnia. Not since World War II has Europe been host to such carnage and human suffering. Now, under American tutelage, all parties have set aside their differences and decided that the cost of war is much higher than the cost of peace.

However, in order for this peace to be successful, there are certain inescapable costs that must be borne by this country and our NATO allies. Only with American leadership, and help from our NATO allies, can we secure peace in Bosnia. We believe the Dayton agreement is a workable framework for ending the bloody war in Bosnia. We ask that you support the president's commitment to implement the Bosnian peace agreement.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:00	The Flintstones
14:25	Droopy Master Detective
15:00	Family Playhouse
15:15	Doc. — Scientific Eye
15:40	Pugwall's Summer
16:00	The Adventures of the Black Stallion
16:40	Sky Trackers
17:00	Children's Programme — Fractales
17:30	Fruits Et Legumes
18:00	Le Feu De La Terre
19:00	News in French
19:15	Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30	News Headlines
19:35	Boogies Diner
20:00	Cinema, Cinema
20:25	The Bold and the Beautiful
21:10	Varieties
21:30	Heartbeat
22:00	News in English
22:25	Counterstrike
23:15	Anastasia
23:59	My Two Wives

PRAYER TIMES

04:52	Fajr
06:14	(Sunrise) Duhr
11:25	Dhuhr
14:12	'Asr
16:36	Maghreb
17:57	'Isha'

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785.
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Santa Church Tel: 622366
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
St. Ephrahim Church Tel. 771751.
Amman International Church Tel. 652526.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel: 824328.
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
Church of Nazarene Tel.675691.
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.

Scattered showers are expected with winds southeasterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, skies will be partly cloudy with a chance of showers, winds northerly active and seas choppy.

Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	6/16
Aqaba	12 / 23
Deserts	3 / 13
Jordan Valley	13 / 24

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 16, Aqaba 23. Humidity readings: Amman 60 per cent, Aqaba 32 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Hisham Kan'an	790236
Dr. Khalil Abu Marjoub	779797
Dr. Bilal Al Sayyid	890280
Dr. Osama Al Husseini	847289
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Nairoukh pharmacy	[illegible]
Al Salam pharmacy	[illegible]
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shmeisani pharmacy	637660
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Najib pharmacy	847532

IRBID:

Dr. Ahmad Qam	231741
Alquds pharmacy	(—)

ZARQA:

Dr. Randa Shahin	995710
Khalifeh pharmacy	985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	617101
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power Company	636381
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Ahlieh Maternity, J. Amn.	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Malhas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	607071
Shmeisani Hospital	669131
University Hospital	845845
Al-Muasher Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666127/37
Al-Ahli, Abdali	664164/6
Italian, Al-Muhajireen	777101/3
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh	775111/26
Army, Marka	891611/15
Queen Alia Hospital	302240/50
Amal Hospital	607155

ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital	(09)983323
Zarqa National Hospital	(09)900560
Ibn Sina Hospital	(09)986732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital	(09)990990
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery	865199

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital	(02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital	(02)272275
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital	(02)247108

AQABA:

Princess Haya Hospital	(03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

05:30	Bangkok (RJ)
08:00	Aqaba (RJ)
08:35	Jeddah (RJ)
09:20	Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:55	Dubai, Dhabi (RJ)
10:05	Beirut (RJ)
[illegible]	Larnaca (RJ)
16:15	Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
[illegible]	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:00	Brussels, Paris (RJ)
17:35	London (RJ)
12:00	Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
18:25	Athens (RJ)
18:45	Frankfurt (RJ)
21:50	Rome, Vienna (RJ)
08:20	Cairo (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

10:00	Sanaa (IY)
12:40	Bahrain (GF)
14:20	Doha (Q7)
14:30	Moscow (SU)
20:10	Beirut (ME)
20:20	Cairo (MS)
23:10	Istanbul (TK)
[illegible]	London, Beirut (BA)
01:00	Amsterdam (KL)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:30	Aqaba (RJ)
05:15	Beirut (RJ)
08:50	Frankfurt (RJ)
11:25	Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:30	Vienna, Rome (RJ)
11:30	Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
12:15	Athens (RJ)
20:00	New Delhi, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
20:20	Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
20:25	New Delhi (RJ)
20:35	Jeddah (RJ)
20:45	Damascus (RJ)
21:00	Cairo (RJ)
22:05	Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
22:40	Bangkok (RJ)
22:45	Sanaa (RJ)

Other flights (Terminal 2)

07:45	Beirut (ME)
11:30	Sanaa (IY)
13:30	Doha (GF)
15:00	Doha (Q7)
16:15	Moscow (SU)
21:10	Cairo (MS)
02:30	Amsterdam (KL)

HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman	8:00 a.m. every Monday
Arr. Damascus	5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dep. Damascus	7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Arr. Amman	5:00 p.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	700/ 500
Banana	600
Banana (Maktoumeh)	600
Cabbage	120 / 80
Carrot	200/150
Cauliflower	140/100
Cucumbers (large)	150/ 100
Cucumbers (small)	320 / 200
Eggplant	170/ 120
Garlic	700/500
Grapes	700/500
Grape Fruit	220/150
Lemon	240/150
Marrow (large)	120/ 50
Marrow (small)	220 / 120
Olives (green)	800/550
Onion (green)	250/150
Onion (dry)	240/ 140
Orange	420/320
Pepper (hot)	220 / 120
Pepper (sweet)	200/120
Potato	200/ 150
Radish	120/80
Spinach	160/100
String Beans	650 / 400
Tangerine	270/200
Tomato	250/140

Princess Basma, Mrs. Tanjung discuss women and development issues

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma conferred at the headquarters of the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) Saturday with Mrs. Tanjung, wife of Lientenant General Faisal Tanjung commander of the Indonesian Armed Forces who is currently on a visit to Jordan.

Mrs. Tanjung and the accompanying delegatioo were briefed by the Princess on sustainable development projects sponsored hy QAF in 50 community development centres throughout the Kingdom.

Discussions at the meeting centred on QAF's efforts to improve the status of Jordanian women through the Jordanian National Committee for Women (JNCW).

Princess Basma referred to the National Strategy for Women, which emerged as a result of a national consensus, as well as to the importance of involving women in decision-making processes.

Princess Basma, wbo is QAF president and JNCW chairperson, told her guest she was impressed hy the Indonesian cxperience in promoting women's status.

Indonesia's experience, the Princess said, was a model for Jordan's efforts to formulate approaches that would improve Jordanian women's stanis.

Princess Basma also spoke of the similarities between the cultures, religion and traditions of both countries. She congratulated Indonesia for enlisting religion in its development schemes, saying that, in working out a comprehensive development strategy, Jordan had drawn inspiration from Indonesia's example.

Following the meeting, Mrs. Tanjung and ber delegation were shown an exhihition of ceramics and rugs produced by the QAF's branches.

Meanwhile, Gen. Tanjung was received by Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker in the presence of Major General Ghazi Al Tayyeb, assistant chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Jordanian Armed Forces.

They reviewed Jordanian-Indonesian relations in various fields as well as the cooperation between the armed forces of both countrics.

Gen. Tanjung said his country appreciated the services of the Jordanian peacekeepers in U.N. missions.

Peacekeepers return home

AMMAN (J.T.) — A contingent of around 50 Jordanian police-men who in September last year joined a multi-national U.N. peacekeeping force in Haiti have returned home.

A statement from the Puhlic Security Department (PSD) said that the group, which provided humanitarian assistance to Haitians at the request of the United Nations had carried out their duties well.

Jordan is the only Arab country to have participated in the international force, formed under a U.N. Security Council resolntion to force Haiti's military rulers to reinstate elected president Jean Bertrand Aristide.

The police force, which returned early this morning, was welcomed home by PSD Director General Abdul Rahman Adwan and other senior PSD officers.

Lieutenant General Adwan praised the police force for their efforts in peace efforts in the Carihbean Island.

According to the PSD statement and hased on reports by U.N. officials, the Jordanian force policed a large sector in one of the most difficult areas of Haiti and were efficient in their duties.

In the year-long mission, the Jordanian police force was entrusted with training local Haitian police force in criminal investigations and traffic organisation.

More than 3,200 troops in the Jordanian Armed Forces who served with the U.N. peacekeeping forces in the former Yugoslavia returned to Jordan at the end of their mission last summer.

Jordanian peacekeepers have served in Cambodia, Macedonia, Haiti as well as the former Yugoslavia.

Health minister leaves for Geneva ICRC conference

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan is participating in the 26th International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent which will open today in Geneva.

Health Minister Aref Bataineh is leading Jordan's delegation to the meeting whicb will be attended by delegates from 186 countries along with representatives of 165 Red Crescent and Red Cross societies around the world, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

A press release issued hy the ICRC headquarters in Geneva said the gathering was one of the most important humanitarian forums in the world.

The conference which is normally held evcry four years, symbolises a nnifying force for nations and their diverse components, the press release said.

The statement noted that the 26th International Conference sbould have been held in Budapest, Hungary in 1991 but that it bad to be postponed owing to political difficulties the country was witnessing at the time.

In the nine years that have elapsed since the last conference held in Geneva in 1986, many humanitarian issues have come to the fore, requiring the conference's attention, according to the press release.

Petra quoted the health minister as saying that in the five-day meetings the delegates will probe matters pertaining to the future of humanitarian services, alleviating human suffering especially in the Third World and charting plans for the next four years.

Meanwhile Saturday it was announced that on Dec. 16 the ICRC office in Amman and the Jordan Press Association will jointly sponsor a seminar entitled: Humanitarian Work and the Media.

The announcement said the two-day seminar aims at focusing puhlic attention on the bumanitarian work undertaken by the ICRC and the national Red Cross and Red Crescent societies, adding that several working papers on the role of the media in armed conflicts and disasters will be reviewed, according to the press release.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bridge hours extended

AMMAN (Petra) — The Puhlic Security Department (PSD) Saturday announced that the King Hussein Bridge on the River Jordan will be open for travellers from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. The hridge will be open for travellers from 8 a.m. nntil 8 p.m. on other days of the week. The announcement said that this schedule will continue until Dec. 24 after which the bridge will open from 8 a.m. till 12 midnight, except for Fridays and Saturdays, when it will close at 3 p.m.

Exports increase by 24%

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordanian exports during the first nine months of 1995 increased hy 24 per cent over the same period in 1994, according to a study conducted by the Amman Chamber of Industry. The study said Jordanian exports in the first nine months this year totalled JD 710 million, while in the same period of last year they totalled JD 560. The study noted that the Kingdom's imports increased slightly.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CONCERT

* Classical guitar performance by Jose Maria Gallardo Del Rey at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8.00 p.m.

LECTURE

* "Arab-German relations (in Arabic) by Dr. Abdo Abboud at the University of Jordan and Abdul Hameed shoman foundatinn at respectively 11.00 a.m. and 6.00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

*AUB Alumni Club of Jordan — Um Uthaina.

EXHIBITIONS

* Photography by poet Ibrahim Nasrallah entitled "The Autobiography of an Eye" at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh.
* Photograph exhibition "Biblical Itineraries" at the French Cultural Centre.
* Abstract art by Lucy Marto, Janine Saaf, and Tete Wegelius at the Royal Cultural Centre.
*Abstract art by Abdul Raheem Wakid at Alia Art Gallery, Jabal Amman (Until Dec. 6).
* Photographs and paintings by Ann O'Neill and Anne Sears at the British Council (until Dec. 3)
* Sculptures & paintings by Iraqi Artist Ismail Fattah, at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh.

Ministry measures see numbers of foreign workers down by 70,000

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN – Stringent measures imposed by the Ministry of Labour have led to the reduction of 70,000 the number of foreign workers in Jordan by the end of last month, according to official figures and statements.

The ministry is also continuing close scrutiny of work permits being issued to non-Jordanians with a view to further reducing the strength of the foreign work force in the country, official statements said.

The minister of labour, Nader Ahn Shaer, said last week that 70,000 of the estimated 250,000 foreign workers in Jordan had left the Kingdom by the time an Oct. 26 deadline set for all guest workers in the country to regularise their status.

Slightly more than 100,000 foreign workers managed to set right their status in the country before the deadline expired.

The deadline was set in line with a decision adopted by the Council of Ministers in August. The decision also banned the employment of non-Jordanians in 15 professions, but left the door open for foreigners to work in areas like agriculture and construction as well as domestic work.

According to Dr. Ahu Shaer, the measures adopted by the government have resulted in opening 30,000 to 40,000 joh opportunities for Jordanians.

Officials said Ministry of Labour inspectors were continuing to pay surprise visits to check vinlations of the labour regulations and, in most cases, foreign workers found working without work permit or engaged in professions other than specified in the work permit were being asked to leave the country in concert with their concerned diplomatic representatives in the Kingdom.

Nader Abu Shaer

In addition, establishments which are found to be employing foreigners in violation of the regulations also face heavy fines as deterrent, according to the officials.

Most of the so-called illegal workers in Jordan were Egyptian nationals, followed hy Syrians. A few hundred Asians, mostly Pakistanis, Indians, Sri Lankans and Filipinos were also found to be working in violation of the rules and were asked to regularise their status under the rules or leave the country.

The bulk of them were found to be in possession of work permits in the agricultural sector, which are relatively easy to obtain, but were engaged in other professions, according to diplomatic sources.

Citizens of most Arab countries do not need a prior visa to entering Jordan and this provisinn, which is in line with agreements between the countries cnncerned, is seen to lead to nationals from some Arab countries, notahly Egypt and Syria, to remain in the country and take up johs without securing Ministry of Labour permissinn.

Official statistics indicate unemployment in Jordan at around 18 per cent, but there are different interpretations to the figure and the features of unemployment in Jordan.

Some experts argue that many Jordanians take up two jobs, and thus deny employment opportunities to the unemployed. On the nther hand, those who hold two jobs argue that they would face hardships without moonlighting.

Another aspect that characterises the situation in Jordan is that many Jordanians are not willing to take up menial, low-paid jobs in the agricultural and construction sectors.

Many also refuse to work in the domestic services sector.

The main argument put up hy those who refuse to accept such jobs is that the income is simply not enough and that foreign workers are willing to accept low salaries because they are also ready to accept "sub-standard" conditions like living 10 or 12 to a low-rent room.

Child education seminar stresses creative teaching

By Rana Husseini
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Creativity in pre-school children education is lacking in Jordan, but experts are studying ways to raise the awareness of concerned organisations and government institutions to find ways to detect talented as well as special needs students and create special programmes for them, according to Ranad Khatih, secretary of the National Association of Children's Education (NACE) which organised a two-day seminar entitled "Creativity in Pre-School Child Education."

"There are no special programmes for talented and special needs students, neither in kindergarten nor in primary sebools," Dr. Khatih said.

Creativity is the ability to produce something new, and in Jordan there is only the Juhilee School which offers education to creative students, said Dr. Khatih.

She added that enhancing creativity among children aged one day to six-years, that is before entering school, is very important and such children need to be decided upon early "in order to train them properly through special programmes that ohserve their energies, thus increasing their talents and creativity."

In an interview with the Jordan Times Saturday, Dr. Khatih said that parents are an important factor in detecting the talent of children.

Such signs which talented and gifted children tend to show, she asserted, include "wit, saying things that show them as being older than their age, and being very active."

Hana Kurdi, of Zahra Welfare Organisation and principal of Sanafer Preschool who proposed a study nn the art of hlocks in pre-schools, said that hlock-huilding for children is essential to the child's development in that it helps build the child's creativity and is a factor in dialogue motivation.

Sbe added that it is also important to train teachers in creative teaching.

There is also a strong need for special attention for students with special needs, according to Mrs. Kurdi.

"The sooner the special needs child is detected, the more possible it is to belp them, Mrs. Kurdi said.

Mrs. Kurdi asserts that her philosophy is learning through playing, using hlocks, sand and water, crayons and clay.

According to Mrs. Kurdi, Jordan lacks pre-school education in government schools except in charity organisations and that these are oot enougb to cover population needs.

Sbe referred to her study, saying that 50 per cent of mental development is formed during the first four years and 30 per cent during the next four years.

"It is very important to focus on how to present educational programmes to students in their crucial years," Mrs. Kurdi said.

During the two-day symposium, which was held at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC), participants discussed the roles of institutions, inclnding scbools, societies, clubs, governmental and non-governmental organisations, in child development and creativity.

Participants exchanged experiences with experts from Egypt and England on the role of their institutions in detecting talented students and enhancing creativity programmes in their countries.

Following the conclusion of the two-day conference, participants presented several recommendations to be implemented in the future.

One of the recommendations, regarding Jordan, was to maintain contacts with the Ministry of Education concerning kindergarten and recommending that this stage be a primary stage compulsory for all children.

In addition, the gathering suggested contacting the concerned anthorities and suggest adopting new techniques to prepare teachers and provide them with the necessary programmes to detect gifted snidents, to prepare studies, programmes and researches related to family, parents, schools, and education to help improve children's education.

They also recommended creating parent awareness programmes becanse of their essential role in enhancing the creative abilities of children and providing a suitable atmosphere througb the social and educational institutions and clubs to encourage creativity among children.

Media should also play a major role in enlightening and encouraging people to realise the importance of creativity. Media should also play a vital role in building the society and providing programmes that enhance creativity.

The participants also suggested calling on societies to organise workshops and training programmes in all parts of the Kingdom tn increase the effectiveness of the child-care assistant with the cooperation of various educational institutions.

JICA to embark on solid waste disposal project in Kingdom

Japanese team to implement study and to initially manage dumping sites

AMMAN (Petra) — The Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Saturday signed a memorandum of understanding with the Jordanian government through which the Japanese agency will implement a study, prepare designs and take charge for the initial management of a project to help the Kingdom dispose of its solid waste.

Minister of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment Nader Thuheirat who signed for Jordan said the study will cover Jordan's principal cities.

Mr. Thuheirat thanked the Japanese government's continued technical assistance in these matters.

After the signing ceremony, the minister noted that JICA teams have been the studying different areas and surveying 10 potential locations for the project to serve 220 local councils as garbage dumping sites.

The ministry and the JICA team have given due attention to geographic, demographic and other considerations, according to Petra.

JICA Representative Mitsuri Siumuri who signed the memorandum, said the Japanese team has prepared a study on garhage dump sites and held a series of meetings with ministry officials to hrief them on the outcome of their work.

Mr. Siumuri said the JICA teams will follow up on the study until Jan. 29 and then will prepare a general draft plan and a final report on the project which will then be passed on to Jordanian personnel in February.

Gallardo del Rey returns to Amman from Spain — classical guitar in hand

By Jean-Claude Elias
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The series of fine music concerts in Amman continues unabated with the return to the capital of Spanish classical guitarist and virtuoso José Maria Gallardo del Rey performing tonight at the Royal Cultural Centre (RCC).

Gallardo del Rey's calibre of music cannot hut be compared to the greatest guitar performers of this century.

He has the same effortless, superior technique as Julian Bream, hut with a warmer interpretation of the Spanish repertoire.

He has the virtuosity of Narciso Yepes, hut with an overall better clarity of sound.

Of Paco de Lucia he has the flame, the passion, hut a higher respect for classical interpretation.

The recorded samples given hy the Spanish embassy to the Jordan Times for review purposes reveal an incredible performer who is equally at ease playing Bacb, Isaac Albeniz or superh arrangements of modern standards sucb as 'Blue Moon,' 'The Shadow of your Smile' or 'Monn River.'

Gallardo del Rey's music is characterised by a perfect balance between tones and dynamics, technique and emotion.

His vibratos, for example, come exactly at the right moment and are never exaggerated.

He is ahle to ohtain orchestral renditions with only the six strings of his guitar — something very few guitarists can achieve without sounding noisy.

José Maria Gallardo del Rey

The RCC programme will feature works by G. Sanz, S. de Murcia, Bach, three pieces by Manuel de Falla (one of them being the famous Danza del Molinero that Paco de Lucia played a few years ago in his tribute to de Falla), Isaac Albeniz and two of Gallardo del Rey's own compositions.

One is entitled "Mar Muerto" (Dead Sea) and was inspired by the artist's visit to Jordan last year.

African conservationist B. Dioum once wrote: "In the end we will conserve only what we love..."

Beyond any doubt, José Maria Gallardo del Rey will make us conserve a generous share of beautiful music.

The event is held under the patronage of Her Majesty Queen Noor. The concert will be presented by the Spanish embassy in Amman, in cooperation with the Instituto Cervantes and with the sponsorship of Freddy for Music.

Yeltsin issues decree on amnesty for Chechens surrendering arms

MOSCOW (AP) — President Boris Yeltsin has issued a decree setting up a commission to consider amnesty for Chechen rebels who voluntarily surrender their weapons.

The commission, to be headed by the Kremlin-backed Chechen Prime Minister Doku Zavgayev, will consider requests by rebels to have charges against them dropped, the presidential press service said.

Mr. Yeltsin's decree will also apply to ordinary citizens who turn in illegal weapons, but will not affect those who have committed serious crimes or have been charged with felonies, the press service said.

Meanwhile, fighting continued to rage in the mountainous Muslim region where a largely ignored July military accord has called for a partial Russian troop withdrawal and rebel disarmament.

Five rebel fighters were killed and eight federal soldiers were injured in clashes in Chechenya since Thursday, Russian military officials in the capital Grozny reported.

Rebels shot at Russian troops 31 times, including 24 times in Grozny. The federal command headquarters came under the heaviest shelling, having been fired at 12 times, they said.

The ITAR-TASS news agency, meanwhile, said the education minister of the Moscow-backed government, Yefim Gelman, was kidnapped in Grozny Thursday by unidentified persons.

Earlier Thursday, rebel fighters seized a senior Chechen police officer and two local television journalists.

The federal military command said Thursday its troops have killed 459 rebel fighters in the past two months and lost at least 35 of their own men. The figures could not be independently verified.

The Kremlin sent about 40,000 troops into Chechenya last Dec. 11 to suppress its three-year-old independence drive. Thousands of people, most of them civilians, have died in the war.

Although the clashes continue, the Moscow-appointed Checheo government has set elections for a new leader of the republic on Dec. 17. Mr. Zavgayev, the prime minister, intends to run along with Ruslan Khasbulatov, ex-speaker of the old, hard-line Russian parliament.

Mr. Khasbulatov said he will fly to Chechenya from Moscow Saturday to organise his campaign, although he made it clear that he considered the vote untimely, and blamed Mr. Zavgayev for pressing to hold it.

"Holding the elections ... without creating conditions for reconciliation of the warring sides may, far from ending the war, produce a new round of bloodshed," Mr. Khashulatov told ITAR-TASS.

"Transition from war to peace is the most difficult issue, and it should be settled not at the polling stations but at the negotiating table," he added.

Rebels loyal to Dzhokhar Dudayev, a former Soviet general elected Chechen president in 1991, have said the vote wouldn't be fair with Russian troops still on their soil.

The rebels have threatened to bring the war back to Russia if the Kremlin continues to press for holding the vote.

Shamil Basayev, the rebel field commander who led a devastating raid on a southern Russian town last summer, threatened to use radioactive devices to contaminate Russian cities.

Last week, a Russian TV network unearthed a container with radioactive Cesium-137 in a Moscow park, allegedly planted by Mr. Basayev. The authorities said it posed no danger but have tightened security in the Russian capital.

The daily Komsomolskaya Pravda quoted a retired Soviet army nuclear weapons expert as saying that the Chechens had nuclear weapons left by the Soviet military. Ret. Col. Zaki Zainullin said he had personally seen two nuclear warheads in possession of Mr. Dudayev's men.

Col. Zainullin is a Muslim Tatar nationalist leader in the Russian Republic of Tatarstan and a sympathiser of Mr. Dudayev.

The Russian Strategic Missile Force Friday reiterated its claim that all nuclear weapons had been withdrawn from Chechenya.

U.S. President Bill Clinton waves after greeting Dublin residents on the College Green after giving an address to the people of Ireland (AFP photo)

Clinton the peacemaker ends historic Irish visit

DUBLIN (R) — U.S. President Bill Clinton, basking in the role of global peacemaker, ended a visit to Ireland Saturday which united a divided nation and challenged any return to 25 years of violence.

"Your country's moral vision has helped bring peace and stability around the world. You have won confidence and respect across the world," Irish Prime Minister John Bruton told him.

Mr. Bruton was speaking at the end of a two-day visit to Northern Ireland and Ireland in which Mr. Clinton's backing for a 15-month peace won rapturous praise and drew huge crowds.

Mr. Bruton hailed him as a world peacemaker and cited a string of Clinton foreign policy successes stretching from Haiti to the streets of Belfast and Londonderry, where the president was feted as a saviour Thursday.

Mr. Clinton, who leaves for Germany Saturday to salute some of the U.S. Troops being assembled for a NATO Bosnia peace force, said there was a new world hunger for peace.

"One thing I am convinced of as we leave is that there is a global hunger among young people for their parents to put down the madness of war in favour of their childhood," Mr. Clinton said.

Mr. Clinton promised continued U.S. support for Northern Ireland's tenuous peace. "The people of Northern Ireland want peace and they will have it," he told the Irish parliament.

He threw his support behind a British and Irish attempt to steer their deadlocked Northern Ireland peace process on the twin tracks of arms talks and preliminary political talks.

Britain and Ireland issued invitations to all Northern Ireland political parties Friday to take part in the talks which are supposed to lead to the start of all-party negotiations by the end of February next year.

But British Prime Minister John Major sounded a cautious note about the prospects for a political settlement in Northern Ireland to crown 15 months of peace since ceasefires by the rival IRA and Protestant loyalist guerrillas.

"There's a chance (to move forward) now, there's a chance. It has taken a long time to build up that opportunity. It may not stay there forever and it may not be repeated," Mr. Major told Sky Television in an interview.

He said the sticking point was the refusal of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), which fought British rule, and the loyalists who battled to maintain it, to hand over weapons.

Mr. Major voiced hope that Mr. Clinton, who opened the White House doors to Gerry Adams, head of the IRA's political wing, Sinn Fein, to stop refusing to discuss guerrilla disarmament.

"If the United States administration can put pressure on some of the parties to play a part in that (achieving a permanent peace), well I welcome that. But it will be an ongoing process," Mr. Major cautioned.

Mr. Clinton played down speculation that Washington might put pressure on Sinn Fein to take a softer line on disarmament. But he promised to back the twin-track approach which Britain and Ireland conjured on the eve of his arrival in Britain at the start of his tour.

French speakers begin summit

COTONOU (R) — France and its club of fellow French speakers began their sixth summit Saturday keen to boost the political role of their movement in the world, with conflict resolution at the top of the agenda.

But the two-yearly summit, bathed in a rich mix of African culture and music and opened by host President Nicephore Soglo of Benin in Cotonou's main sports centre, looks set to skirt round the thornier political issues — at least in public.

"My country wants to see "La Francophonie" become a political force," Mr. Soglo told delegates, setting the tone of the summit.

"You will see that Cotonou will mark a coming of age," he told French radio earlier. "Everyone is in agreement... We have to reconcile the cultural, the economic and the political."

La Francophonie, a loose association of nations grouping 400 million people from around the globe, has traditionally fought against the domination of English in the international language of trade, technology and communication.

Organisers say the three-day summit, in the economic capital of the west African nation that is the ancestral home of the voodoo cult and the fabled Amazone women warriors, will mark a turning point.

French President Jacques Chirac and presidents and prime ministers and other political leaders from the 47 members plan to create the post of secretary general of La Francophonie.

The job, delegates and officials say, will involve promoting the movement's concerns in the way the Commonwealth does for Britain and its English-speaking one-time colonies.

As a group the leaders do not plan to join the outcry over human rights and lack of democracy in Nigeria — black Africa's most populous country, which is surrounded by Francophone neighbours, including tiny Benin.

The Commonwealth suspended Nigeria over the Nov. 10 hanging of nine activists in the Ogoni rights group. South Africa's Nelson Mandela and others want tougher sanctions — such as an embargo on Nigeria's oil exports.

But Francophone ministers who agreed the summit agenda decided not to put foward a specific resolution on the issue.

"I think it is important to be effective without making noise," Mr. Soglo said. "We must help Nigeria find a way out of this situation and that is what we will try to do discreetly."

The sensitive issue of nuclear tests, French or otherwise, would not feature, officials said.

Officials said conflict resolution would be the theme of Saturday's first private plenary session — with the spotlight firmly on the Hutu-Tutsi ethnic conflict and the refugee crisis it has spawned in central Africa.

The leaders meet in a new pyramid-style conference centre.

Mr. Soglo, helped by a hefty injection of cash from former colonial ruler France, has given Benin's sleepy main city Cotonou a face lift and shaken it out of its usual lethargy.

Security was tight. France was working closely with Benin's army and security forces. French ships patrol off-shore.

Disaffected Benin soldiers and supporters of former leader Mathieu Kerekou have been arrested over a Nov. 15 rocket attack on the conference centre. The attack did little damage.

FBI seizes moon rock from auction block

NEW YORK (R) — A rock that a Manhattan auction house was planning to sell as a piece of the moon has been seized by the FBI, newspapers reported in Saturday editions. The New York Times quoted National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) spokeswoman Eileen Hawley as saying the rock advertised was from the same mission and of the same general weight as a moon rock that vanished in 1970. "Let me stress...We don't know if this is a true lunar rock. We don't know if these two incidents have anything to do with each other," she told the newspaper. Ms. Hawley told the Washington Post if the rock turned out to be a stolen sample then "It's U.S. Government property." The rock disappeared when a shipment of registered and certified mail containing a sample from the Apollo 12 mission of November 1969 was stolen en route to a researcher at the University of California in Los Angeles.

German ministers approve limited spelling reform

MAINZ, Germany (AFP) — The 16 education ministers of Germany's federated states have approved a limited reform of German spelling, Hamburg Education Minister Rosemarie Raab, who chaired the meeting, said. The changes, already approved in Austria and Switzerland, the other two countries where German is a national language, are considerably reduced from those proposed when the reform was first mooted three years ago. Out of the 12,000 words considered to be the basic vocabulary, only 185 will change their spelling, compared with several thousand in the original project, and the scrapping of the distinctive capital for the initial letter of the names of objects has also been dropped.

84-year-old Santa sorts out grotto robbers

SHEFFIELD, England (AFP) — An 84-year-old man employed as Santa Claus chased and caught a member of a teenage gang who tried to steal a toy car from his department store grotto in this northern English city Friday. Stan Eyre pinned the 15-year-old boy against a wall and held him there until security staff arrived and took over. "It just made me mad when I saw these youths at the back of the grotto and one of them reached in and took a toy from a pile at the back," he said later. The store's manager showed the toy car thief more Christmas spirit than he had showed Stan — he ordered security staff to throw him out into the street and decided against prosecution.

Prince Edward to wed in spring — papers

LONDON (R) — The girlfriend of Britain's Prince Edward is quitting her public relations job in December to prepare for her royal wedding in the spring, newspapers said Thursday. Sophie Rhys-Jones, a blue-eyed blonde who has been dating the prince for two years, told work colleagues she was leaving to avoid compromising her personal life. "Public relations girl Sophie, 30, will now concentrate on preparing for her future career as a princess," the Son, Britain's largest selling newspaper, said. "The move is the strongest sign yet that the devoted couple will marry, probably next year," added the Daily Mirror. Buckingham Palace refused to confirm or deny the report.

22 children drown in Zimbabwe lake

HARARE (R) — Twenty-two Zimbabwean children have drowned when a twin-engined Catamaran taking them on a school outing capsized on a lake near the capital Harare, police said Saturday.

The pilot told reporters the boat capsized in calm waters because excited schoolchildren all ran to one side of the upper deck.

"Our sub-aqua unit managed to retrieve nine bodies yesterday before dark. Early this morning they went back into the water and retrieved 13 bodies...Making a total of 22 confirmed dead," Superintendent Luke Huni told reporters by Lake Chivero.

He said 16 pupils, their teacher and the pilot were rescued by national parks staff, members of boating clubs and tourists. The 38 children, aged 12 to 13, were from Moleli Secondary School, 80 kilometres west of Harare.

As Mr. Huni spoke, a distraught couple looked for the body of their son and were directed to a Harare Mortuary.

The boat's pilot, Bernard Zvega, said he had only steered the vessel about 30 metres offshore when some of the children on the top deck started running around excitedly, rocking the boat.

"I told the teacher to control them and seat them in equal groups on either side so that the boat could balance...The teacher shouted at the children and they ran to one side of it and their weight tipped the boat over," said Mr. Zvega.

"The lake was very calm. There was a storm over Harare but it was still some way off from here," he added, denying reports the Catamaran had been caught in bad weather.

He said most of the survivors were on the top deck and had been wearing life jackets while those who died had been trapped inside the vessel when it capsized. The majority of the dead did not have life jackets because they had run out.

Rescue workers had ripped off safety rails and the top deck in a bid to save the trapped children.

Mr. Zvega said the boat-owner, Gary Stafford, had instructed him to take the children out on a smaller Pontoon 12 at a time but their teacher and a security guard had insisted that they take the bigger boat because that was what they had paid for.

Chinese Premier Li Peng (right) welcomes Cuban President Fidel Castro for a meeting at the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse (AFP photo)

Castro ends Beijing visit, lays wreath at Mao's mausoleum

BEIJING (AFP) — Cuban President Fidel Castro wrapped up the first leg of his historic nine-day visit to China Saturday, laying a wreath inside the mausoleum of late Communist leader Mao Tsetong in Tiananmen Square.

The rare gesture by a visiting foreign dignatory appeared to be aimed at honouring the veteran 69-year-old Cuban revolutionary, while also highlighting the two nations' ideological solidarity — an element that has mostly played second fiddle to economic pragmatism during Mr. Castro's trip.

As well as placing the large wreath at the feet of a statue of Mao in the mausoleum's entrance hall, Mr. Castro, who arrived here Wednesday for his first-ever visit to China, placed another wreath at the monument to people's heroes in the massive Tiananmen Square in the centre of Beijing.

Wearing a trenchcoat on top of his trademark olive green military fatigues and peaked cap, he also braved Beijing's cold winter weather to visit the Forbidden City, the former imperial palace.

Later Saturday, Mr. Castro left for the central city of Xian, burial place of China's first emperor, Qin Shihuang, in whose extensive tomb was uncovered the famous army of terra-cotta warriors.

From Xian, Mr. Castro, who has made no secret of his interest in China's economic reforms, is to travel to the booming east coast to witness for himself their results.

He is to visit Shanghai and the southern province of Guangdong, including China's showcase special economic zone of Shenzhen.

In his meetings here with Chinese leaders, Mr. Castro has stressed that his country has launched reforms aimed at "building socialism with Cuban characteristics," a phrase reminiscent to the one widely used in China to describe the transformation that began 15 years ago.

Haiti slum dwellers want the police back

PORT-AU-PRINCE (R) — Residents of Haiti's largest slum said Friday they wanted the police to come back, a week after rioting over the accidental shooting death of a young girl by a police officer forced them out.

Six-year-old Vania Thermidor was mourned by her classmates and some of the capital's poorest residents in the sprawling slum of Cite Soleil Friday. The girl's accidental killing on Nov. 23 by an off-duty member of Haiti's new National Police led to violent protests.

Residents attending the funeral said a well-armed gang known as the "Red Army" was to blame for the rioting that killed an elderly woman and wounded three officers.

"It was a small group of people that shot at the police and burned down the police station," said Stanley Jacques, 26. "The Red Army does not have the support of the community."

Police were escorted out of the area after armed men disarmed and shot at officers after Thermidor's death. An elderly woman killed in the crossfire was also buried Friday.

The slum of 200,000 has been without a permanent police presence since the rioting.

Haiti's first civilian police force has come under intense public scrutiny following a wave of unexplained shootings by officers.

On Thursday, Adrian Rameau, the chief administrator of the new force, was fired for failing to keep the officers in line.

According to residents, the Red Army is comprised of a small group of extremists who advocate violence to achieve change.

"If the Red Army attacks you, you have nowhere to go," said Jacques.

Dhaka premier may agree to interim government

DHAKA (R) — Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, seeking a way out of a political crisis which is crippling Bangladesh, has said she may agree to allow an interim administration to supervise the next general election.

"The prime minister hinted at such a possibility within the limits of the constitution while talking to reporters accompanying her on a train trip on Friday," a press officer at Mrs. Khaleda's office told Reuters Saturday.

The election is due by March but may be held earlier following last week's dissolution of parliament.

Opposition parties several months ago resigned en masse from the legislature and have been waging a campaign of general strikes and transport blockades to press demands for Mrs. Khaleda's resignation and elections under a caretaker administration.

The next opposition-led action is a call for an indefinite shutdown of railways, ferries, roads and airports starting on Dec. 7.

"I don't want to go to the polls alone. If there is a consensus (with the opposition parties) and if it's in accordance with the constitution... I may not object to the setting-up of an interim administration headed by the president," the officer quoted Mrs. Khaleda as saying.

Opposition leaders were not immediately available for comment. They earlier insisted Mrs. Khaleda transfer power to Chief Justice Abu Taher Mohammad Afzal, who would head a neutral administration to conduct free and fair elections.

Mrs. Khaleda said Thursday she could ensure the fairest election the country has ever had. She has persistently rejected demands to resign.

The embattled prime minister ended a two-day campaign train tour Friday at Chittagong, where she challenged her opponents to test their popularity in the polls.

She said her ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) was pledged to preserve democracy and the Election Commission had been strengthened so that vote-buying was no longer a threat.

Riot police drag off one of at least 10 students arrested during pitched battles in Seoul between police and students calling for the immediate arrest of former President Chun Doo-Hwan for his alleged role in the 1980 Kwangju massacre (AFP photo)

Seoul court issues arrest warrant for Chun

SEOUL (Agencies) — A South Korean court Saturday issued an arrest warrant for ex-President Chun Doo Hwan, an official at the Seoul District Court said by telephone.

"Yes, we have issued the warrant," the official said, without giving details.

The application by Seoul prosecutors for the warrant accused Mr. Chun of masterminding a 1979 coup, saying the grab for power was actually a military rebellion.

Mr. Chun Saturday snubbed a prosecution summons and left Seoul for his home town. Prosecutors had demanded to question Mr. Chun over the coup and his role in an army massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators in May 1980 in the city of Kwangju that killed 192 people by official count.

State media have reported Mr. Chun is likely to be arrested in the early hours of Sunday morning in his home town of Hapchon.

Meanwhile Some 1,000 students clashed with riot police here Saturday while attempting to march to the house of Mr. Chun, witnesses said.

During the clash at the gate of the nearby Yonsei University, the students wielding metal pipes and hurling firebombs tried to force their way through the police, who kept the protestors at bay with a barrage of teargas bombs.

Earlier at a rally in a downtown park, the students from universities in Seoul chanted slogans calling for the execution of Mr. Chun and burnt him in effigy.

The clash came after Mr. Chun openly rejected the summons for questioning and retreated to his hometown.

He accused President Kim Young-Sam of reopening the closed case for political reasons.

Mr. Chun challgened Mr. Kim Young-Sam to explain how Mr. Kim could charge Mr. Chun with insurrection after joining forces with him to win the 1992 presidential election.

Sri Lanka troops seal off Jaffna

COLOMBO (R) — Sri Lankan Armed Forces sealed off the northern rebel stronghold of Jaffna City Saturday in what a senior military source described as a "major military victory" against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).

After weeks of painstaking, stop-start advances towards the coastal town, a column of troops captured the 18th century Dutch-built fort at 1030 local time (0500 GMT), the military said in a statement.

"It's major military victory," a senior military source told Reuters. "It's a major victory, but we'll keep on fighting. We're happy about it, but we're also sad we lost many of our soldiers."

Chief military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe, telephoned by Reuters, said the operation to take Jaffna had been "rounded and finished".

He later called Reuters to deny having said the operation was finished. He said the town centre had been completely sealed off.

A despatch by the Defence Ministry Operational Headquarters said "further clearing and mopping up" of the town centre was in progress.

It was not immediately clear how many troops were lost in Saturday's fighting but the Defence Ministry said 26 soldiers and more than 80 Tigers were killed in Friday's clashes.

"The troops easily overcame resistance offered by the terrorists" Saturday, the Defence Ministry Operational Headquarters said in a statement.

"Another column northwestwards...kept advancing until they linked up with the troops in Jaffna Fort area.

"The Jaffna Fort area has now been completely sealed off by the troops. Terrorists within the city centre will have to either surrender or commit suicide."

In an earlier release, the military had said the Tigers were using natural obstacles such as canals and drains to engage the troops inching through the maze of largely deserted urban lanes.

"Rows of houses and boundary walls were prepared for demolition (by the LTTE) and were exploded as troops entered buildings," the military said.

Jaffna City is the capital of Eelam, the LTTE's would-be Tamil homeland in the north and east of tropical Sri Lanka.

They have been fighting their separatist cause since 1983 in a war which has killed more than 50,000 people.

The fall of Jaffna is of military and psychological importance, analysts say, as it represents the spiritual and cultural centre not just for the LTTE, but for all of Sri Lanka's minority Tamils.

The Tigers have ruled Jaffna, once Sri Lanka's third largest city, since 1990 when they captured it on the departure of Indian peacekeeping forces.

Analysts said it would not be easy to persuade civilians, who have fled south in their thousands, to resettle in Jaffna for fear of LTTE reprisals.

"There will be urban guerrilla warfare in Jaffna which civilians will have to deal with once they go back," one said.

Asked how the military plans to persuade civilians back into Jaffna, the senior military source said: "We will make sure rebels will not get inside Jaffna City. The entire town is sealed off. Only if they give up their weapons will they be allowed to come in."

Some 500 battle-hardened rebels were said to be trapped in the town, slowing down the troops' advance by firing "machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and small arms from well prepared positions", an earlier military statement said.

On Thursday Brig. Munasinghe predicted the town would fall.

"Give us a couple more days," he told reporters Thursday. "This Jaffna town will be entirely ours."

Ramos hails interim deal with Muslim rebels

MANILA (R) — President Fidel Ramos hailed Saturday an interim deal struck with Muslim separatist rebels and expressed confidence a final peace agreement would eventually be reached with the guerrillas.

Mr. Ramos said in a statement he was "firmly committed" to finish the job as soon as possible. "Peace cannot wait. It is the lifeblood of national progress and stability."

An interim agreement over education, economic and financial systems, mines and minerals, the administrative system and government, as well as the judiciary and the introduction of Islamic Shariah Law, was reached after five days of talks.

But critical differences remain between Manila and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and a fourth round of talks would be necessary to break the deadlock, officials said.

Mr. Ramos said the two sides failed to reach agreement on how to integrate the MNLF into the Philippine Armed Forces, set up a provisional autonomous government in the southern islands and revenue sharing.

"The progress made... infuses our nation with renewed confidence," he said. "We anticipate the fourth and final round of talks with high expectations."

The third round of talks in Indonesia was sponsored by the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC). Participants were seeking an agreement to end a 23-year-long separatist war by the MNLF.

Mr. Ramos said the parties were in agreement on an autonomous region in the island of Mindanao, 800 kilometres south of Manila, but not on the designation of the head of the region.

The key issue of a referendum to approve the proposed autonomous region was also unresolved.

The MNLF wants Mr. Ramos to proclaim an autonomous government in the area, but Manila has said a referendum was necessary before such a government could be set up.

MNLF leader Nur Misuari told reporters Friday he was confident the interim agreement would satisfy most of the Moro people.

"God willing, it will suffice to meet more than half the expectations of the people, not only those belonging to the MNLF, but most of the movements in our homeland," he said.

Japan cult guru fires lawyer again

TOKYO (R) — The leader of the doomsday cult blamed for this year's poison gas attacks on the Tokyo subway fired his chief defence lawyer for a second time Saturday, a Tokyo District Court spokesman said.

The spokesman told reporters that Shoko Asahara, guru of the Aum Shinri Kyo (Supreme Truth) sect, gave no immediate reason for dismissing his main lawyer for the second time in six weeks.

Asahara first fired lawyer Shoji Yokoyama on Oct. 25 on the eve of his trial for murders linked to the March 20 subway attack in which 11 people died and 4,000 were made ill by the release of sarin nerve gas.

The action forced the postponement of the trial. It is expected to start early next year.

Several days later the guru rehired the 67-year-old lawyer and legal experts speculated the first firing was a ploy to delay the start of his trial.

After the rehiring, the Tokyo District Court appointed nine public defenders as back-ups to Mr. Yokoyama. Under Japanese law, a defendant cannot go on trial if he is not legally represented.

Mr. Yokoyama is a controversial, Osaka-based lawyer who has frequently represented criminals linked to "yakuza" organised crime groups.

Legal experts were puzzled when Mr. Yokoyama first took on the case by his decision not to hire any other lawyers.

They said in a case of this magnitude — Asahara is charged with 11 murders — at least 10 lawyers are needed just to examine the mountain of prosecution evidence not to mention collecting defence evidence and testimonies.

Asked ealier why he wanted to defend Asahara, Mr. Yokoyama replied:"I want to get to know this Asahara person. I wanted to know the truth of this case and the sect, through the trial."

Prevention stressed in U.S. on World AIDS Day

WASHINGTON (R) — U.S. officials stressed the need for prevention and kicked off an AIDS education campaign Friday as rallies across the country marked World AIDS Day.

Health officials began distributing information to pregnant women on testing for the HIV virus that causes AIDS. The campaign also emphasised positive results of the drug AZT, which can reduce by nearly 70 per cent the risk of passing the virus to newborns.

Bilingual pamphlets, videos and announcements will be distributed to women of childbearing age as part of the campaign. "This is something we can do," said President Bill Clinton's top AIDS adviser, Patsy Fleming. "We want to get the message out."

Museums and galleries staged "a day without art" to portray the devastation the disease has wreaked on the artistic community, removing some paintings from walls and draping other works of art with sombre black cloth.

In New York, Pablo Picasso's oil portrait of Gertrude Stein and Andy Warhol's Self-Portrait, were draped in black at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

In Philadelphia's central JFK Plaza, a landmark Love sculpture by 1960s artist Peter Max was draped with a white cloth emblazoned with "rage." At a noon rally in the plaza, readers recited names of area residents who had died of AIDS.

A "united AIDS tour" was held in New York's Harlem neighbourhood featuring workshops, plays, a carnival and a basketball tournament. In front of New York's City hall, AIDS activists staged a 24-hour vigil, reading a seemingly endless list of names of those who have died of the disease.

After sundown, more than 100 New York buildings, monuments and bridges darkened their lights for 15 minutes as a sign of grief for the losses to AIDS. A "night without light" also took place in San Francisco, Miami, Seattle, Atlantic City, New Jersey and Las Vegas, where some 20 hotels planned to turn off their marquees and floodlights.

Actor and AIDS activist Richard Gere lashed out at complacent politicians who have failed to fund research programmes to help find a cure for the deadly disease.

"I'm kind of angry that we're still doing these things," he told reporters before an awards dinner Thursday, the eve of World AIDS Day. "We've had too many World AIDS Days."

Although several new drugs can prolong the life of AIDS patients and help them ward off some of the diseases that plague them, a cure or vaccine remain beyond science's grasp.

Nearly a half-million Americans have been diagnosed with AIDS. Almost 300,000 of them have died since the epidemic began in the early 1980s. An estimated 600,000 to 900,000 more are believed to be infected with the HIV virus.

Around the globe, the World Health Organisation estimates there have been 4.5 million AIDS cases and 18 million adults and 1.5 million children are infected. AIDS continued to be the leading cause of death in the past year for people under 45 in the United States and Western Europe, the head of the U.N. anti-AIDS programme said in New York Friday.

"In the United States and Western Europe, AIDS continued to be the leading cause of death for people under 45 — a bigger killer than violent crime, which gets far more media attention," Dr. Peter Piot, a Belgian physician, told an AIDS Day symposium at U.N. Headquarters.

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) released an AIDS Day video on how the disease affects those over the age of 50, who account for one in 10 AIDS patients. "This crisis is touching their lives in many ways and yet there exists little education or assistance focusing on older people," said AARP official Anne Harvey.

Some Clinton administration officials said they feared the Republican-controlled Congress could harm the war on AIDS by cutting funds for anti-drug programmes and scaling back Medicaid, a key source of AIDS care for poor children.

"President Clinton and I urge Congress to provide adequate funding for drug and HIV/AIDS prevention, education and treatment," White House anti-drug adviser Lee Brown said.

Taiwan ruling party keeps majority in polls

TAIWAN (AFP) — Taiwan's ruling Nationalist party (KMT) maintained its majority in parliament following elections Saturday, KMT officials said.

With all constituencies counted, the KMT was guaranteed at least 85 seats in the 164-seat parliament, they said.

The number is less than the 96 the KMT won in the last parliamentary elections in 1992. It also received only 46 per cent of the overall popular vote, down from the 53 per cent it won last time, the lowest on record.

There were 128 seats up for grabs in Saturday's direct elections, with 36 to be allocated based on each party's percentage of the popular vote.

The KMT won 67 seats in the direct elections and, while the allocated seats have yet to be awarded, the KMT was guaranteed at least a parliamentary majority.

The breakaway New Party, founded by KMT members who split with the ruling group in 1993 over President Lee Teng-Hui's leadership, made big gains, more than doubling the seven seats it holds in the current parliament.

It was guaranteed at least 16 seats, while the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) secured at least 41 seats. Four were won by independents.

The DPP took 33 per cent of the popular vote, the New Party 13 per cent, while the rest went to minor parties and independents.

The KMT and the New Party both support reunification with China, while the DPP is in favour of formal independence.

Dole is seen winning battle of the states

WASHINGTON (R) — Louisiana and Iowa are duelling for the right to stage the first binding vote of the 1996 presidential campaign, and the winner looks likely to be — Senate Republican majority leader Bob Dole.

Iowa has staged the crucial first vote of the campaign since 1972 by holding caucuses, meetings at which party members can vote for their presidential nominee. This year's caucuses are scheduled for Feb. 12, to be followed eight days later by the New Hampshire primary, when voters cast ballots in a more traditional way rather than attending meetings.

These two votes traditionally narrow the presidential field to no more than two or three candidates in each party and the winner of the New Hampshire primary is usually best placed to win the party's presidential nomination.

The Louisiana Republican Party threw a fly into the ointment, however, by scheduling its caucuses for Feb. 6. It said Republicans in the south deserved the chance to have an early say in the election campaign.

But Republicans of Iowa and New Hampshire responded this week by issuing a joint ultimatum giving candidates until next Wednesday to sign a pledge promising to shun Louisiana.

"I hereby pledge not to compete in or campaign for support in the Louisiana Republican district conventions unless the Louisiana Republican Party schedules the district conventions on a week later than the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary," the document said.

Most Republican candidates were quick to comply — but not Texas Sen. Phil Gramm, who has been campaigning hard in Louisiana and had hoped to surprise Sen. Dole there. A Gramm campaign official said the senator supported Iowa's status as the first state to vote but he was running for president in all 50 states and would not withdraw from Louisiana.

Sen. Dole leads the Republican presidential field by a wide margin in the polls and is heavily favoured to win the nomination unless he stumbles in one of the early votes.

Iowa Republican Chairman Brian Kennedy said Sen. Gramm would be badly hurt in Iowa if he refused to sign the pledge. "If he's the only one running in Louisiana, it will be meaningless. Meanwhile, he'll be significantly hurt in Iowa," he said.

That can only favour Sen. Dole, since Sen. Gramm is the best-financed and best-organised of his rivals.

MQM calls for strike in Karachi

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — The ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM) called Saturday for a one-day strike in protest at alleged maltreatment of mourners at a funeral procession in the Pakistani port city of Karachi.

The MQM, in a statement, appealed for the strike to be observed Sunday, a normal working day in Pakistan, throughout the southern province of Sind.

It accused security forces of disrupting Thursday's funeral of Mohammad Naeem, an MQM worker shot dead by police.

"This was the worst incident of its kind in Pakistan," it said. "Never before had it happened that men were not allowed to attend the funeral and, contrary to custom, women had to bear the coffin and perform the burial."

The MQM, enjoying a strong following in Karachi and several other cities in Sind, is fighting for greater political and economic rights for Mohajirs — Urdu speakers who fled from India at partition in 1947 and their descendents.

The government and MQM blame each other for the violence in Karachi, where this year's death toll has topped 1,730.

The MQM has paralysed Karachi, Pakistan's commercial hub, on 22 days this year, causing losses estimated in a recent study by a business group at nearly $38 million a day.

In Islamabad, Sind province Chief Minister Abdullah Shah accused the MQM's London-based leader Altaf Hussain of stirring up trouble in Karachi at the behest of regional rival India.

"India has a direct hand in whatever is happening in Karachi," Mr. Shah told a news conference, charging that India was behind problems created there by MQM chief Altaf Hussain.

He said India wanted to divert world attention from alleged human rights violations in Indian-ruled Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Shah, whose brother was killed by unidentified gunmen in Karachi on Nov. 23, accused Mr. Hussain of involvement with what he called terrorists, but said the security forces were closing in on them. "They are on the run," he added.

He said the level of violence and killings in Karachi had dropped considerably and the government was tracking 1,500 to 2,000 people it had identified as "terrorists".

Mr. Shah said there were no plans to reconnect mobile telephone networks in Karachi which the government cut off on Jan. 4 in an attempt to disrupt the communications of violent groups.

Quebec radicals form militant group

MONTREAL (AP) — Fifteen radical Quebec separatists, led by a man once jailed for terrorist bombings, have formed a new movement devoted to the "liberation" of Quebec, a Montreal daily reported.

Le Devoir said the group is headed by Raymond Villeneuve, who founded the Quebec National Liberation Front in the 1960s and was convicted of involvement in a separatist bombing campaign.

His new group, the Quebec National Liberation Movement, includes other former members of the terrorist front, as well as separatists disenchanted with the governing Parti Quebecois following the narrow defeat in an Oct. 30 referendum on independence for the French-speaking province.

Mr. Villeneuve told Le Devoir the new movement would organise protests, ostracise opponents of independence and denounce violations of Quebec language laws that limit the use of English by businesses.

Blocking traffic and occupying the offices of companies that violate Quebec's French-language charter are some of the tactics the group plans to use, he said.

Mr. Villeneuve said the new organisation would not adopt the terrorist tactics of the liberation front, but told Le Devoir that certain actions could "involuntarily" degenerate into violence.

During the 1960s and early '70s, the liberation front waged a war for Quebec independence, going so far as to plant bombs in English-speaking areas of Montreal.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau sent army troops into Quebec in October 1970 after terrorists kidnapped British Trade Commissioner James Cross and Quebec cabinet minister Pierre Laporte. Mr. Laporte was later found murdered in the trunk of a car. Mr. Cross eventually was freed unharmed.

Mr. Villeneuve, 52, started campaigning for Quebec independence in 1959 when he was 16 and became a founding member of the liberation front.

He was sentenced in 1963 to 12 years in prison for planning a number of bombs, including one that killed a security guard. He skipped parole in 1968, spending 15 years in exile in Cuba, France and Algeria. He was paroled in 1985 — one year after he returned to Canada.

Mr. Villeneuve would not reveal the names of other members of the new organisation, saying he wanted to protect them against police harassment.

The movement will be signing up subscribers at a public assembly on Dec. 10 in Montreal.

The group's aims, outlined in a manifesto, include fighting to liberate Quebec from Canadian domination; an end to linguistic privileges accorded to the English-speaking minority and a moratorium on immigration until Quebec has full control of its borders.

The Parti Quebecois government is in transition, with charismatic separatist leader Lucien Bouchard planning to give up his parliament seat in January to become premier of the province.

Mr Bouchard has pledged another secession attempt for Quebec within the next few years.

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Balance on course

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein, in his speech from the Throne yesterday, chose to set the tone for Parliament's third ordinary session not on divisive grounds but on common basis acceptable to all. Political culprits, on the right and left, had predicted that the Monarch would tackle such sensitive issues as the need to change some laws (press and publications, professional associations) but not others (electoral law), stating explicitly his preference for what should be done. But he did not, choosing instead to identify the common grounds on which almost everybody agrees, and leaving it for parliament itself to draw up its own legislative programme for the coming year.

True, the King did make clear his and Jordan's commitment to taking certain steps and policies that ought to be adopted in order to put the Kingdom on the right track in the new era of peace. For example, he said that it was inescapable for Jordan to strengthen the roots of democracy, with belonging, efficiency and faith replacing confusion and heading into a process of destruction and self-damage. And he made plain that we needed to enter the era of peace-building, put our country on the economic map of the world and preempt all attempts to marginalise our role in rebuilding Arab relations. But the King did in no way try to tell the parliamentarians how to go about conducting their own business in this regard. The way parliament reacts to the introduction of any legislative changes will very much depend on the way the government chooses to interpret the King's speech yesterday and the one before it, on Nov. 9. Just after the King made his earlier speech, the prime minister pledged that many changes to the laws governing the press or the associations would be made through the proper constitutional channels.

As regards Iraq and following much speculation about Jordan's position on that issue the King was emphatic that Jordan's priority remained focused on lifting the sanctions imposed on the Iraqi people and ending the situation that seems to be splitting the country. Mainly foreign observers had expected that the King would go further than that and even call for a change in the Iraqi regime in yesterday's address. But such expectations proved wrong because not only the time or the circumstances are not conducive to such call, though all true men and women believe in bringing justice and democracy to Iraq, but also because His Majesty never fails to believe in balance and wisdom in adopting policies and taking his actions.

Meanwhile Jordan would continue to build peace and prosperity, exert all possible efforts for restoring Arab solidarity and consensus and assert its place on the economic map of the world.

What remains to be seen is how the government and Parliament would translate the King's policy statement into concrete policies whether on the press, the associations, Iraq, Palestine, Arab-Arab relations or other Jordanian domestic affairs. We trust they will handle the debate with open minds and in a totally free and democratic atmosphere. The responsibilities are indeed great.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

COMMENTING ON the death in Iraq so far of half a million children as a direct result of the U.N. sanctions, Mahmoud Rimawi, a columnist in **Al Ra'i**, said that a genocide is being waged on the Iraqi people as the world community seems to be passive and indifferent to the Iraqis' plight. It is true that many nations have been calling for an end to the embargo, which has been causing untold suffering to the Iraqi people over the past 64 months, but no serious efforts have been made either at the U.N. Security Council or at the Arab regional level to save the lives of the innocent population of Iraq, said the writer. Those who persist in maintaining the embargo on Iraq are committing a crime, and those who support their views are accomplice to the crime, he added. He said in the face of this injustice, countries like Oman, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and others, which have denounced the continuation of the sanctions and called for an end to the sufferings of the Iraqis, should back their words with deeds and take practical steps towards ending differences among Arab states and thus pave the way for a common Arab action aimed at lifting the sanctions.

COMMENTING ON a recent symposium held in Amman to discuss ways for combating corruption, a writer in **Al Dustour** said that the government no doubt has the power and the means to deal with corruption but it has to show the will to deal with this chronic question and provide the proof and the concrete evidence for that. Mohammad Daoud said the symposium should be backed by action. All those who are found to be abusing their public positions, embezzling public funds, practising favouritism in appointing or promoting persons to certain positions or found to be committing administrative or financial violations should be put on trial, said the writer. He said all those responsible for violations that are being discovered by the Audit Bureau or the Inspection and Control Bureau should be held to account for their actions, he said. Once the government has shown a stand in a single case and imposed punishment on the violators, said the writer, this measure would deter many other people from committing such abuses, and so corruption would be curtailed in this country.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

Japan's help partly prompted by belief in Jordan as force of stability

AS OF 1990, Japan became the number one financial supporter of Jordan. The value of its soft and onconditional loans extended to Jordan during the past five years stands at approximately $1.5 billion.

Japan is currently formulating its programme for future aid to Jordan, therefore a specialised Japanese researcher was sent to Amman to prepare a fact-finding report, to quantify the Jordanian ecooomic and financial oeeds and to identify the best means to satisfy those needs.

The Japanese researcher, Maoyuki Kaneko, from the Institute for World Politics and Economy in Tokyo, called on many Jordanian economists and politicians, mainly in the private sector with three questions in mind. The first is about the forms of aid that Jordan needs and expects from Japan, the second is related to the volume of unemployment in the country and the third is about the high population growth rate. It is obvious that the three questions are relevant and that the subjects are interrelated.

We told the Japanese researcher that Jordan needs at least three forms of Japanese assistance, namely grants, if at all possible, soft loans with a high grant content and participation in Jordanian industrial and agricultural projects whereby Japan would provide the know-how, participate in management and marketing, and own part of the equity to spur confidence of the local investors. The latter form of aid is, of course, the best form from a donor point of view, because it is visible and permanent, unlike loans, where we will be happy at the moment of signing the agreement and withdrawal of the funds, after which the loan becomes an additional burden.

As far as unemployment is concerned, we have no dependable statistics because we don't have an unemployment insurance scheme with a valid register of the unemployed. It is not true that the total unemployed in the country is equal to the total of those with employment applications at the Civil Service Bureau plus those registered at the employment offices of the Ministry of Labour. There are many unemployed persons who have reasons not to apply to these two governmental agencies, and many of those who did are not unemployed, they simply like to change their present jobs. Our rough estimate of unemployment rate is 15 to 18 per cent of the total labour force.

When it comes to population growth, or population explosion if yoo like, it seems that the problem is being alleviated. The natural net growth in Jordan used to be 3.8 per cent in the seventies; it declined to 3.2 per cent in the eighties. It is believed that the current rate of population growth in Jordan is below 3 per cent per annum, which is still too high, but it is in decline due to higher standard of living and the spread of education and awareness of social responsibility. Immigration, compulsory or voluntary, which is responsible for an average of 1.5 per cent population growth per year, could not be measured by annual rates, because it depends on the regional developments and governmental policies towards the influx of newcomers.

Although the Jordanian populatioo is growing at 3 per cent per annum, the labour force is growing at double that rate, because females make up around 50 per cent of the new entrants to the labour market while they do not make more than 14 per cent of the present labour force.

Japan is interested in helping Jordan, not only due to peace with Israel, and the blessings of the United States, but also because it views Jordan as a force of stability in the Middle East, including the oil-rich Arab Gulf states.

Why are the prices falling in AFM?

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

THE LACK of bullish behaviour by the Amman Financial Market (AFM) has beeo puzzling bank executives and analysts for a while now. In spite of the increases in activity witnessed this year relative to last year wheo AFM had a negative growth of 9.4 per cent, trading and prices are still very low. Also, in the last week of November, barely a month after the conclusion of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) summit stock prices have shown very little evidence of the optimistic mode in which MENA concluded and even took a deep plunge on Monday Nov. 27th, 1995 to 148.66 points, a level that is just below the recognised psychological barrier of the market which is 150 points. Here are some of the reasons for the state of AFM.

■ Some sources, predominantly prominent members of the private banking industry, have claimed that the tight money policy of the Central Bank was behind the depressed activities of AFM. This is a possibility because as the money supply becomes tight the interest rate rises and investing in bonds becomes more attractive than investing io stocks.

■ Some people claim that the above view is wrong and that there is no relationship betweeo the interest rate and the quantity of money circulating in Jordan. Otherwise, how could one explain the existence of a high interest rate and at the same time the availability of ample funds for investments? Yet the answer is extremely simple: Jordan is somewhat vulnerable to what goes oo in the other parts of the Middle East. The Gulf crisis, which repatriated hundreds of thousands of Jordanians — many with huge cash reserves and looking for investments io housing (which is a national mistake ordained oo us by a defunct rent law that should have been repealed decades ago) — has simultaneously increased both investment spending and the money supply. But this happened in 1992, and its effect must have dissipated by now. So, we are back to an inverse relationship between the interest rate and the money supply. Therefore, to assume that oo relationship between the interest rate and the money supply exists would not be totally correct.

■ Some view the recent resignation of the Central Bank governor to have affected investors' behaviour as they await his replacement and speculate about Jordan's future financial policies. Some assuring statements by the government should have been made by now to allay investors' fears and signal to them the future direction of policy in order for them to make rational decisions. The fact that banks have suffered the most from the recent fluctuations of the market gives some credence to this view.

■ The assassination of the prime minister of Israel, soon after the MENA summit, is believed to have contributed to the uncertainty of investors in Jordan. However, the effect of this factor has been minimised by the actions of all concerned parties in voicing their unswerving commitmeots to peace.

■ Some suggest that the recent tension with Syria was a destabiliser of the AFM. But this change is very recent (thoogh oot totally new to our relationship with Syria) and cannot explain totally the slowdown in the stock market over the past three weeks. In other words, the trend had started before this supposed tension.

■ Some observers claim that the slowdown in stock purchases is due to the state of "watch and wait" exhibited by many investors as they conjecture the continuity of the present government which had been rumoured to undergo significant changes next month with the start of the new parliamentary session. This is a very valid reason for the uncertainty of AFM, and the good news is that it will disappear, ooce those changes have taken place next month.

■ Some blame the overabundance of newly issued stocks for the drop in stock prices. This may be true, and if it is the main reason then the set back is only temporary. It will soon be resolved by the market. However, the question that should be asked is whether there has been other recent funds-flight from Jordan. An affirmative answer may mean that Jordanians have again sought investments elsewhere, this time possibly as a result of contacts made at the summit io Amman, which is not a very nice thought.

■ One possibility which, to my knowledge, has not been mentioned yet is the flight of funds from the AFM to other financial markets around the globe as the Jordanian dinar became tied to the U.S. dollar. Jordanian investors, fearing no huge foreign exchange risk because of the dinar-dollar tie, see in the international financial markets a less risky outlet for their funds than before the tie. Thus, a seemingly sound policy may cause more damage than good.

■ One other important, yet less obvious, reason for the lacklustre performance of the AFM may be the impatience of the Jordanian investors who expect a dividend around every corner. Questions like "where is the peace dividend?", "where is the MENA dividend?" are all indications of a shortsighted investment outlook. Based upon the experiences of other countries, such dividends will come in due time and they will take their time in getting here. This is a theoretical given and an empirical fact. An investor that expects money to flock to Jordan two weeks after MENA can only be described as naive. Investments, unlike loans which we have been accustomed to as government and a people, come in smaller instalments and over longer periods of time.

All the above are viable explanations of the depressed state of the market. Some of them are stronger than others and probably more lasting. The government must reduce any uncertainties that are generated by its actions or lackthereof. As usual, when it comes to Jordanian problems the answer never lies with one party or person but must arise from careful analysis and study.

Fundamental fault that divides the world

Is globalisation taking place? Far from it, says the man who believes the single ideological clash has been replaced by multiple confrontations based on culture. **Bryan Appleyard** investigates

DEEP IN the psyche of the United States there lies the thought that everybody is really American, only by an accident of birth do they call themselves Japanese, French or whatever. Being American is an ideal condition, the moral and political apotheosis of the species. During the cold war this belief neatly divided the world into two. There were Americans aod aspirant Americans — those who supported the United States against the Communists — and there were the rest — those either too misguided or too oppressed to see the light.

On the face of it, the West's victory over Communism should have provided an instant proof of this conviction. But instead, there was puzzlement. America's economic dominance was being challenged by newly confident Far Eastern nations. And, internally, America seemed divided against itself. This country had something that had made it victorious, but there seemed to be no agreement about what it was. Meanwhile, in the gulf, in Yugoslavia, in Africa, conflict seemed to be as entrenched as ever. The world was apparently incapable of acknowledging its ultimate American destiny.

In 1993, in the journal Foreign Affairs, Samoel P. Huntington provided one answer. In an essay called "The Clash of Civilisations?", Mr. Hunting, a Harvard professor, said the siogle ideological confrontatioo of the cold war had been replaced by multiple confrontations. These were based not on politics, economics oor even on the demands of then nation state, but rather on culture. "The oext world war," he wrote ominously, "if there is one, will be a war between civilisations."

The thesis is pessimistic. Many had boped that the triumph of liberal democracy signalled at least the beginning of the end of armed conflict. Liberal democracies have never gone to war with each other and, now that it seemed so obviously to be the one desirable form of governmeot, nations should gradually move towards a new era of peace in which the sheer economic inefficiency of war would become unthinkable. But Mr. Huntington began from the view that fundamental conflicts would persist and then he simply asked what would, in the future, be likely to drive them.

For the United States, this pessimism had its positive side. After the cold war, American institutions faced an identity crisis. From the Pentagon to the CIA, they wondered what they were supposed to do. This was a country on a war footing, but now with no obvious enemy.

Mr. Huntington, in the conclusioo of his essay, gives them their programme. The U.S. must work to promote cooperation among countries within its own civilisation — Europe and the Americas; it must limit the expansion of military power of Islamic and Confucian states and it must exploit their differences and conflicts. The programme was, in short, to shore up the West against the anti-West. It was as decisive a statement of the need for eternal vigilance as any that were made during the cold war.

The intellectual heart of this argument is Mr. Huntington's concept of civilisation as the new determining force in world affairs. A civilisation, he says, is a culture entity, it is "the highest cultural grooping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have, short of that which distinguishes humans from other species." In the case of Japan, the civilisation and the nation state coincide, but in every other case a civilisation includes many different states.

Mr. Huntington identifies eight civilisatioos: Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latio American and "possibly" African. Perhaps his most potent example of the way these blocs divide is his oew Iron Curtain. The conquests of Communism drew this line too far to the West. In reality, it runs between Russia and Finland, down through the Baltic states, Ukraine and Romania, and then it twists ominously through the Balkans. This is the ancient fault-line between Catholic and Orthodox Christianity. It makes it clear that the Bosnian conflict is far more fundamental than we like to think. In the former Yugoslavia, the Europe of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment had reached its easternmost limit.

The point about such divisions is their depth. They are old and they embody basic differences between peoples. We are just beginning to grasp that the Serbs are not like us. Equally, the Confucian states — notably China — will remain essentially incomprehensible because they simply do not share our attitudes to morality, individual freedom and human rights. And, of course, the Salman Rushdie affair demonstrates the extent to which an unbridgeable gap will always exist between a theocratic culture and the West, where religion has been relativised to the point where it cannot make ultimate political demands.

Mr. Huntington rejects the argument that, as travel increases and communications improve, these differences will become less profound. Rather, he says, they will become more intense as people struggle to retain their cultural identity against the globalising tendencies of the modern world.

"The interactions among peoples of different civilisations," he writes, "enhance the civilisatioo-consciousness of people which, in turn, invigorates differences and animosities stretching or thought to stretch back deep into history." The impact of the essay was almost as great as that of Francis Fukuyama's "End of History" essay published in 1989. Mr. Huntingtoo, previously a solid, respected but uncontroversial thinker, was suddenly being debated at conferences around the world. Perhaps this is because he was saying exactly the opposite of Mr. Fukuyama. Whereas the End of History argument suggested that all cultures were converging on the ideal of liberal democracy, the "Clash of Civilisations" suggested the ancient divergences were, for the time being, absolute. History, far from being over, had been revitalised by the end of the

(Continued on page 7)

The Independent

LETTERS

An anticrime programme is needed

To the Editor:

RAPE AND other forms of violence against women and children continued to be a major social problem. Articles on a series of rape, molestatioo and sexual crimes have been published in the Jordan Times during the past few months, all of which dealt with the crimes and verdicts issued by the respective courts. None of these articles, however, discussed the cause of such crimes and the corrective measure that should be taken to address the problem, apart from the court penalty inflicted on the criminal.

As a social psychologist, I feel the need for further follow up to assist in the healing and rehabilitation of both the criminal and the victim through social and psychological counselling.

Once a criminal is behind bars, he is cut off from his society and left alone to suffer the penalty imposed upon him without corrective treatment by the authorities. Upon getting out from prison, such criminal might cause further damage to the society by committing more crimes.

On the other hand, the victim of a sexual crime, if left without care and social healing will be suffering from humiliation and pain all of his life, and will develop strong hatred to the society, transforming him in many cases into a criminal himself. Such a victim, io my view, is io desperate need of social counselling and care. Social studies showed that 85 per cent of sexual criminals were themselves victims of similar dehumanising crimes.

Criminal psychologists offer both victim and criminal professional help in transforming their negative and damaging feelings into positive and productive ones.

An innocent 10-year-old was raped and molested 100 times by a mature 65-year-old is an obvious example of great negativeness and dehumanisatioo caused by frustratioo and depravation.

The criminal received a death sentence. But what did the 10-year-old receive beside a life-long sense of guilt, anger and post-crime trauma.

Counselling programmes have been proven to help in reducing delinquency and crime. The social and personal problems suffered by the victim and the criminal can lead to further crime.

How many more young silent victims are out there suffering from continuous physical and sexual abuse?

Could a daughter, sister or close friend be the next victim?

Would every effort to eliminate criminal crimes be as equally helpful in providing more security in our beloved Jordan?

Lina Munsher Oweis,
Amman.

King voices resolve to build peace and confront misuse of democracy

(Continued from page 1)

ie of democracy and we ll confront them in an ropriate manner, accord- to the Constitution and to law," said the King in the sually short, 20-minute ech.

he King referred to the ddle East and North Afri- conomic conference held Amman in October and the new era in the region ranted new concepts and roaches to help develop lan. "This is an important promising phase, God ing, which requires new cepts and standards based competence and disci- e," the King said. "It also ires belief in this country giving it its fair share of lty and gratitude. All e elements totally contra- some of what we see."

oting that Jordan signed eace treaty with Israel in nber 1994, the King de- ed that "now we are ond the stage of peace- ing. It has become our t, even our duty to enter phase of peace-building."

he King referred to the nomic policies adopted by government and said the gdom would "strengthen structure of our national nomy through a model nework of partnership the European Union as l as through joining the rld Trade Organisation."

ollowing is an official lish-language translation he full text of the King's ch:

THE NAME of God, d with His blessings, I clare open the third sess n of the twelfth Parliamt. It is a source of great isfaction that this distinghed assembly convenes a time when Jordan is ntinning its confident rch towards peace and velopment.

From this cherished Arab stion, and as our forehers intended, emanated contemporary Arab Reissance movement. This ntry has remained faith- to the principles and ble objectives of the eat Arab Revolt aimed liberation, unity and a tter life for the people of r Arab homeland. Jor- n's struggle under the shemite leadership has en a model of relentless d sincere hard work that d no motive except pre- ving the interests of our meland, and defending Arab Nation at large. To this end, Jordan has ly become a haven for e men, past and present, o seek refuge within its rders whenever they en- unter bardsbip or enever they are denied ir basic right to a free, ure and dignified life. cording to this, Jordan s embraced everyone, be y Al Ansar (helpers) or ugees, to form a melting t that has become one ited, solid and loving mily; a deep-rooted tional unity that bas athered all sorts of rms and difficulties. Jnrn, as is always expected it, will forever say no to ntry and regional isolationism. It will always be proud of its national identity and of belonging to the Arab homeland, and will *continue to be a solid* barrier in the face of all attempts at penetration and extremism. We will resist, with all the strength that God has given us, any deviation from this righteous path. Our motto will always be: We are all Jordanian, and we are all for Jordan and for the Arab Nation.

Jordan's stands have always been supportive of its nation and will continue to be so, for we were partners in the struggle for liberation from occupation and colonialism. We were always the first to fulfil our national duty, at all times, in defence of the honour of the nation at crucial turning points, even at the expense of our own legitimate interests, as we bore responsibilities that far exceeded *our resources and capabilities* to achieve that end.

When military action was the only available option to bberate the land and regain our rights, Jordan was at tbe forefront of tbose pioneering fighters who paid dearly with their lives and at the expense of the sustenance of our people. Jordan's brave armed forces fought heroically on every front, snmething which cannot be denied except by those who are spiteful or obstinate. These acts of heroism will be an eternal memory in the hearts and minds of all, and will always be a source of pride and inspiration for future generations.

Jordanians also played an active role in contributing to Arab development in general and to the building of a number of Arab countries, which remember Jordan's efforts in this regard with much appreciation and gratitude. Jordanians are still a source of support for their brethren in the Arab Nation at large, as they never hesitate in coming forward to assist, be it in a certain predicament, or a battle, or a building endeavour. And when negotiation presented itself as a means to regain those nsurped rigbts, Jordan stood by its brethren, calling for a just, comprehensive and durable peace, which would restore those rights to their rightful owners, in particular the right of the Palestinian people to freely determine their future, and to establish their independent state on their national soil.

We provided to onr Palestinian brethren the nmbrella, which snbsequently led to their being accepted as an independent and central negotiating side. They then chose to reach their objectives and attain their rights through direct negotiations, and bave since reacbed an agreement with the Israeli side, the various aspects of which continue to seriously unfold today. The vision of an independent Palestinian entity draws nearer; an entity which we hope will assume its expected role on the Arab scene. As far as we are concerned, we will remain to be a source of support for, and assistance to our Palestinian brethren until they attain all their rights.

Jordan, once the Palestinians were negotiating on their own, subseqnently took to negotiating over its own rights in its land and water. These efforts were crowned with the arrival at a peace treaty, ratified by your distingnished assembly through an honourable and democratic process. This treaty has restored to us our full and complete rights in terms of our land and our water. We are now, ladies and gentlemen, beyond the stage of peace-making. It has now become our right, even our duty, to enter the phase of peace-building, so that our people can enjoy the fruits of peace and assume its role in the Arab and *international* arena in safety and comfort. As the battle for peace has its requirements, my gnvernment will shoulder its respnnsibilities witb tbe seriousness and confidence required for us to benefit fully from the comprehensive development that our region will witness.

As we strive to implement the peace treaty with Israel, we cannot accept the bypassing of our leading role in establishing clear inter-Arab relations, and in uniting the Arab fold in the face of the challenges of a period ebaracterised by giant groupings. For this reason, my government has tried and will continue to work towards transcending tbe estrangement and alienation that befell our relations with some sisterly countries, and to restore cohesion to joint Arab action, away from previous positions which bave been superceeded by regional and international developments and events. We will continue to work towards lifting the embargo imposed on the people of Iraq who have never thought twice about fulfilling their duty towards their nation, in whose defence they made many a great sacrifice. We firmly believe that it is their right to enjoy a free and dignified *life within the* framework of freedom, democracy and justice.

We are fully determined to place Jordan on the economic map of the world, taking advantage of its strategic location, and of the elements of security and stability on it soil, as well as its process of development in an atmosphere of democracy and moderation. The Amman Economic Summit was the crowning achievement of our efforts in this regard, and came as a natural result of the era of peace. Through the coordinated efforts of those dedicated Jordanians from all walks of life, from the public as well as the private sectors, all working in the spirit of one team, Jordan was able to highlight its civilised accomplishments in terms of preparation, organisation, and presentation of feasible projects.

The summit was an overwhelming success by all accounts, and it is our sincere hope that our people will feel the fruits of these efforts, and the results of this endeavour in the few years ahead. This can be achieved through providing more basic services, attracting numerous investments, creating new job opportunities and developing the national economy in a way that would guarantee the enhancement of our beloved country's potential. Also, providing the basic needs of citizens and realisting their hopes for a better future.

My government bas already begun serious work aimed at strengthening the structnre of our national economy through a model framework of partnership with the European Union, as well as through joining the World Trade Organisation. This year has witnessed a rise in economic recovery indicators, in no small part due to the important role played by your distinguished assembly in passing a package of economic legislation that create the appropriate environment for domestic, Arab and international investment.

Capital expenditure by the government has increased by approximately 20 per cent. National exports increased by 26 per cent. The gross domestic product increased by a margin of 6 per cent. And the satisfactory level of financial and monetary stability achieved by the country enabled the exchange rate of tbe Jordanian dinar tn maintain its current level. Our national debt has been reduced through debt forgiveness, debt purchase, or debt rescheduling. We will continue to work along with friendly and sisterly countries, as well as international organisations in order to further reduce the burden of our national debt.

My government will continue to implement measures to curtail bureaucracy tbrougb simplicity and transparency in order to activate the pioneering role of the private sector in the process of economic development. The infrastructural services are now spread across the entire country, and my government is working towards further expanding these services, while ensuring fair distribution, and paying special attention to remote areas as well as promising regions that will bopefully become solid pillars of our national economy. My government is also working on institutionalising pnblic administration and simplifying its procedures in a manner that people can relate to, enabling them to conduct their business easily, efficiently and fairly.

The educational process is the basis of development and the foundation for scientific and technological advancement. In this regard, my government is still in tbe process of implementing the educational reform programme, which would prepare future generations to face the development needs and requirements of the twenty first century. This can only he done through enhancing knowledge and further develnping edueational methods, as well as instilling the basic concepts of participation, cooperation and democracy.

My government will pay special attention to the youth of Jordan, by creating a national youth forum through which they can explore their potentials in the service of their country and nation, guided by an information system characterised by responsible awareness and npen-minded advice. Since we realise that the information sector and the press reflect the image of the country before our citizens and the world at large, we will work towards enhancing their roles in the framework of responsible freedom, and away from demagoguery, ebaracter assassination, defamation and total disregard for the country's achievements.

Our pulpits shall remain committed to our faith and to the constants of our nation, preaching in the name of God and to His righteous way through wisdom and good counsel, devoid of fanaticism or rigidity, and certainly away from the use of religion as a means to achieve personal, partisan, or vested interests. The cultural movement will remain to be the focus of our attention so that we can enhance freedom of expressinn and support writers and innovators, as well as establishing more cultural centres.

My government is ever concerned with providing comprehensive security to the country and its citizens, where people can feel confident that they, their property and their honour are safegnarded. This should streteb to cover social security through providing job opportunities and care for needy families; through encouraging social assistance programmes and charitable work in a country that is abundant with goodwill; through guaranteeing social harmony and solidarity, and widening the network of medical insurance. It should also stretch to encompass food security through developing agricultural programmes, subsidising the productive farmer, and regulating agrienltnral prodnction, marketing, and processing. Further to secure sufficient food reserves and ensure that subsidy reaches those wbo deserve it in an appropriate manner.

Our democratic process has now taken root and has become a remarkable model enmmended by our friends and envied by those who bode us ill. We will continue to guide this process until all its benefits are reaped, for the betterment of our people, in an atmosphere of freedom and pluralism of thnught, opninn and affiliatinn, and in the framework of belonging to this homeland and commitment to its supreme interests. Democracy does not mean anarchy or transgressing the country's law and order. Nor does it mean harming national unity, denigrating every accomplishment, and assassinating the good reputation of our country and its people. We will continue to observe these phenomenae which fight democracy in the name of democracy, and we shall confront them in an appropriate manner, according to the constitution and to the law, for we are all responsible for putting an end to these alien trends that have nothing to do with our social and national values.

We realise clearly that stability is the cornerstone to achieving progress and development. The absence of stability inducees apprehension, confusinn, and leads us towards the unknown. We also realise that this is an important and promising phase, God willing, whieb requires new conecpts and standards based on competence and discipline. It also requires belief in this country and giving it its fair share of loyalty and gratitude. All these elements totally contradict some of what we see in terms of attempts tn chip away and destroy, on the one hand, and attempts to inflict self damage, on the other.

Our impartial judiciary will be given every care and attention. My government will continne to provide it with every means of support and to preserve its independence so that it can remain to be the guarantor of justice and the protector of people's rights and freedoms. As for our valiant armed forces, they have always been and continue to be the impregnable shield that protect our bomeland, supported in earnest by natinnal security departments within the country.

As we pay tribute to the dedicatinn, lnyalty, discipline and professionalism of our armed forces, the Arab Army, we recognise and appreciate their beroism and the sacrifices they made in all the battles they entered in defence of our nation and our rights. We recognise, with exceptional pride, their exemplary performance which reflected the bright and noble image of our country while participaling in internatinnal peacekeeping forces in a number of countries around the world.

We are also proud of our natinnal security departments, which have always been a true example of discipline and dedication in protecting national security in accordance with their sublime principles and high standards. Consequently, my government will extend every support to our armed forces and security departments by providing state-of-the-art weaponry which will enable them to carry out their noble duties efficiently and with distinction.

"My Lord! Make this a city of peace and feed its people with fruits."

May God's Peace, Mercy and Blessings be upon you all.

U.S. sees party participation in Egyptian election as heartening

WASHINGTON (USIA) — "One of the things that's heartening about the elections in Egypt this time is that more of the opposition parties were involved, played a rnle, put up candidates," State Department Acting September Glyn Davies said Friday. "Of course the Muslim Brotherhood was not among them."

There has been "an improvement, compared with earlier polling, because there were more candidates available from some of the opposition parties. And the government of Egypt, as any state, has the right and nbligation to take steps in its security interests if it judges that a group is threatening those interests," Mr. Davies said. He added that the United States had concerns about the polling.

The office of the spokesman posted the following answers to taken questions:

Q: What is the U.S. reaction to Egyptian parliamentary elections?

A: After several weeks of *intense campaigning*, Egyptian voters went to the polls November 29 to elect 444 members of the People's Assembly, Egypt's parliament. There were over 4,000 candidates and voter turnout was reportedly strong in some areas.

"We are encouraged by widespread public interest in the campaigns and the expeeted retnrn of many opposition parties to the People's Assembly. Most opposition parties chose not to take part in the 1990 parliamentary elections.

We hope that the results of the election and the formation of a new People's Assembly will serve tn strengthen the democratic process in Egypt.

Q: What about reports of government intimidation and electoral fraud, particularly relating to tbe Mnslim Brotherhood?

A: We are concerned by reports of actions taken by the Egyptian government in the period preceding the election, in particular claims of barassment, arrest, detention, and the trial of political activists and campaign workers.

We have also seen reprots of irregularities and government interference with the election. These reports, if confirmed, would be in direct contradiction with President Mubarak's public instructions to his government not to interfere.

In light of statements by Egyptian government officials and their public commitment to free and fair elections, we expect that allegations of fraud and electoral irregularities will be fully investigated.

Q: Does the U.S. consider the election to have been free and fair?

A: I want to reiterate that reports of irregularities and government intereference, if confirmed, would be in contradiction witb President Mubarak's public instructions to his government not to interfere and the Egyptian government's pnblic commitment to tbe holding of free fair elections. We expect that all allegations of fraud and electoral irregularities will be investigated.

Srour reelected unopposed

(Continued from page 1)

mean anarchy or transgressing the country's law and order. Nor does it mean harming national unity, denigrating every accomplishment and assassinating the good reputation of our country and its people."

Speaker Srour pledged in a *speech after his election* that he would give all deputies eqnal opportunity to speak and that the House's administration would do all it can to preserve pluralism and democracy.

"I pledge to do my best for the service of everybody and to preserve the right of all deputies to express their opinions freely even if there were differences," he said.

"The march of Shura and democracy will continne forward and add to our achievements to ensure an atmospbere nf justice, dignity and righteousness," be said.

The House elected a committee to prepare its reply to the King's speech. The panel includes Ibrahim Kilani, Abdullah Ensour, Abdul Karim Dughmi, Mohammad Daoudieb, Fawzi Toueimeb, *Abdul Hadi Majali, Moham*mad Hajj and Taher Al Masri. The committee is expected to meet today.

The Upper House of Parliament convened earlier under the chairmanship of Speaker Ahmad Lawzi. The Senate elected a committee to reply to the King's speech. The committee includes Taher Hikmat, Nasseredine Al Assad and Jawdat Sboul.

The Senate also elected its jndiciary, financial, administrative, foreign affairs, educational, environment and social development committees.

"The issues that we are tackling are not limited to domestic matters, they extend to the big role that Jordan plays on the national, regional and international levels," Speaker Lawzi told the Senate. Parliament seeks to "enhance our democratic *process and respect* for buman rights as well as to reconstruct relations with all countries in light of the new visions that emanated from the Amman economie summit and the Barcelona conference."

"Our democratie march will continue based on cooperation between the legislative and executive authorities under the guidance of His Majesty King Hussein," he added.

Jordan, France sign military accord

(Continued from page 1)

lon, speaking tbrougb a French-Arabic interpreter.

"The Middle East needs stability and peace," said the French minister, adding that the positions of King Hussein and political leaders "will allow the peace process to continue and create stability under all circumstances."

Mr. Millon said the issue nf French military supplies, inclnding aircraft, would be discussed at experts level "in the coming weeks." He did not elaborate.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported tbat the King's talks with Mr. Millon dealt with Jordanian-French relations and means to support peace in former Yugoslavia. It said the King presented Mr. Millon with the Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order.

ndamental fault

(Continued from page 6)

d war. The old, cultural isions had reemerged to ide us all.

But is Mr. Huntington bt? Clearly, in an obns sense, he is. Deep lt-lines do exist in the rld that represent more n just economic or poli- al differences. We may nsole ourselves that they en to Sting nr Michael kson in Japan, but it es not take long to realise y are hearing something ferent. Eqnally, tbe nericans might have felt de that a rough replica of Statue of Liberty was cted by the students in nanmen Sqnare. Bnt ina remains a Confucian iture imbued with the erly alien idea that govment cannot ultimately wrong because it is the bodiment of wbat is ht.

Yet globalisation is happing. Local cultures are ing weakened by the insion of alien influences. ually, because they con- l the software, these inences are American. Bnt point is that, whatever influences, they tend to liver the message that the mands of the local, the mands of your civilisan, are not absolute; you n choose others. Maybe r. Huntington is right to this globalisation will nce a kind of cultural paranoia, an intensification of difference. But that is only speculation and there is equally anthoritative speculation pointing in the other direction.

Finally, the charge can be levelled at Huntington that he appears to be bending over backwards to define an aggressive foreign policy for the U.S. Cutlural conflict is an even better justification than the merely ideological conflict of the cold war. There are more enemies and the frontiers are more clearly defined. And this tbreat is mnre or less permanent, a eonstant pressure on the Americans to stiffen their sinews and summon up their blood.

Bnt the fairest summary of Huntington's position is that it has been an important corrective. The defeat of Communism led to many facile simplifications, notably about the universal panacea of free market economics. This led to dangerous generalisations about the world and the absurd assumption that, in the end, everybody would succumb to Western consumerism. Hnntington's importance was to point out that there are great differences between peoples that cannot be eliminated either by liberal idealism or conservative economics. For *not everybody* is American and some might not want to be to the point of war.

King Fahd

(Continued from page 1)

painful knee. Last year he nnderwent gall bladder surgery.

Diplomats in Riyadh said the king was due to travel to Geneva January for an operation nn his knee.

His state of health is being closely monitored by oil markets concerned about any upset in the world's top oil producing country which produces eight million barrels per day.

The British weekly magazine The Economist said in its edition on Nov. 18 that the king was ill and highlighted that he was the man behind *all* decisions on the country's oil policies.

King Fahd became the country's fifth monarch on June 13, 1982, following the sudden death of his half-brother, King Khaled.

He had been named crown prince and first deputy prime minister in 1975 with the assassination of King Faisal.

He was born in Riyadh in 1921, the 11th of the 45 recorded sons of Abdul Aziz Ben Sand.

Bosnia deal is challenged

(Continued from page 1)

Muslim Federation, Kresimir Zubak, officially resigned from the post Saturday, the Croatian news agency Hina reported.

Mr Zubak, a Croat, had threatened to resign last montb after he strongly opposed conceding Croatbeld territory in northern Bosnia to Serbs under the Dayton accord.

His resignation was accepted at a meeting of his party at Mostar, in southern Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mr. Zubak — a member of the Bosnian branch of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman's HDZ party — was an unelected party appointee to the post in 1994.

He will be replaced in the federation presidency by Vladimir Soljic, "defence minister" of the self-proclaimed Bosnian Croat republic of Herzeg-Bosnia, the agency said.

Mr. Zubak bad taken issue with last month's peace deal under which the strategic Posavina corridor — which had a majnrity Croat and Muslim pre-war population — was allowed to remain in Serb hands.

In Zagreb Saturday, more than 3,000 demonstrators called on President Tudjman to reject the deal ceding the corridor to the Serbs.

The opposition rally was the largest in Croatia since independence in 1991, and the second in a week.

A senior U.S. military official said meanwhile the first group of U.S. troops assigned to a NATO peacekeeping mission in Bosnia will leave Germany by Monday.

The official said the first U.S. troops, expected to number about 700, will be part of a 2,500-member NATO "enabling force" to pave the way for the main bulk of 60,000 troops, who will go to Bosnia after the Dayton peace deal is formally signed in Paris.

Earlier, U.S. President Bill Clinton formally approved the NATO plan to deploy troops in Bosnia and paid a special visit to boost the morale of U.S. units heading for the former Yugoslav repubbe.

Russia

(Continued from page 1)

Russia would be strengthening its ties with all countries in the region," he added.

Israel's Deputy Defence Minister Ori Orr said Saturday it was possible Israel could mount an operation to persuade Syria and Lebanon *to stop* attacks by Hizbollah guerrillas.

Mr. Orr said that in effect there was nn peace process at present between Israel and Syria.

"I'm saying that it's possible that there would be a situation, really, that it would be necessary to take an operation such that both the government of Lebanon and the government of Syria, and also Hizbollah, would understand that continuing like this ... has a more painful price for them," Mr. Orr told Israel's army radio. He refused to elaborate.

Mr. Orr said Israel did not take into account efforts to revive stalled peace talks with Syria wben considering how to react to pro-Iranian Hizbollah (Party of God) guerrilla rocket attacks from South Lebannn on its nortbern communities.

PNA refuses guaranteed seats

(Continued from page t)

had already registered in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, including East Jerusalem, by the end of November, Palestinian sources said.

Around 1.2 million Palestinians out of a population of 2.5 million will be eligible to vote in the poll, held in constituencies — 11 nn the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and five in Gaza.

Imad Al Falnuji, owner of Al Watan newspaper affiliated with Hamas, attended Saturday's meeting but said be was not there as a Hamas representative.

Mr. Arafat has been trying to channel Hamas' and Islamie Jihad's opposition away from violence — tbeir militants have killed scores of Israelis in suicide bombings — and into political channels.

The smaller Islamie Jihad has been most resistant to Mr. Arafat's overtures. Hamas and the PNA have conducted a dialogue but Hamas has so far stood by its call for a boycott of the elections.

The PNA has itself delayed endorsement of the draft law, wbieb also bas to be approved by the Palestine National Council (PNC).

The acting speaker of the PNC, Salim Al Zanoun, said 80 members who are residents nf the Gaza Strip were taking part in the meeting.

On Wednesday, be proposed delaying the Palestinians' first general elections after 42 members of the council held a meeting in Ramallah.

Mr. Zanoun said he would meet Mr. Arafat to consider the main points in the electoral law and suggest amendments.

"We will ask the Palestinian cabinet for an eventual delay of the Palestinian elections," Mr. Zanoun said, without explaining why they were seeking the delay.

The PNC comprises 483 members representing all Palestinian political factions, but they have not convened since a 1991 session

Mr. Arafat has called on the council to meet two months after the elections, as requested by Israel, to amend the PLO charter which calls for the destruction of the Jewish state.

Gulf Arabs help Bahrain revive economy

MANAMA (AFP) — Saudi Arabia and two other Arab Gulf states have decided to help their neighbour Bahrain revive its economy after a wave of anti-government protests earlier this year, diplomats and economists said.

The government here said the protests did not affect the economy, although schools and other facilities were hit, with damage to electric transformers alone estimated by the government at $2.38 million.

Diplomats and bankers in Manama said the unrest also undermined the retail and hotel trade and froze investment projects for several months.

"The government hopes to revive the situation in 1996 thanks to a large Saudi oil concession, employment possibilities for Bahrainis in Kuwait and heavy investment from the United Arab Emirates," an Arab diplomat said.

Saudi Arabia, linked to Bahrain via a bridge over the Gulf, plans to grant an oil concession to Bahrain. For several years more than 75 per cent of the oil refined by the Bahrain Petroleum Co. (BAPCO) has come from Saudi Arabia.

Oil industry sources here said Riyadh plans to give Manama its entire share of the production 100,000 barrels per day (b/d) of the offshore field at Abu Saafa, whose reservers are estimated at 23 million barrels.

Under an accord signed in 1972, Bahrain had a one-third share of the production and Saudi Arabia two-thirds, but divided it up equally after the end of 1994.

Bahrain, whose sole oilfield was discovered in 1932, has seen its oil revennes decline. Its reserves are currently estimated at nearly 160 million barrels, bnt its exploitable reserves will run ont in about 20 years.

Production peaked at 76,639 b/d in 1973 but has declined at the rate of 4.3 per cent a year and output is estimated now at 42,000 b/d, with exports to Europe and Asia.

In 1994, oil brought in $758 million, or 45 per cent of the total revenue of $1.667 billion, a drop of 17.9 per cent compared to 1993's oil revenue, according to official figures.

The budget deficit almost doubled in 1994 to $340 million, up from $172 million in 1993.

Meanwhile, Kuwait promised this month to encourage its state-run and private firms to hire Bahrainis following a visit by the labour and social affairs minister, Abdul Nabi Al Shoola.

"Bahrain attaches great importance to cooperation with Kuwait in this field," Mr. Shoola told reporters. Bahrain has been hurt by unemployment created by the gradual exhaustion of its oil reserves.

But the authorities said the number of unemployed is not worrisome and can be absorbed. Mr. Shoola said the unemployment rate for nationals has dropped from 13.8 per cent at the end of 1993 to 4.6 per cent in August.

Diplomats and exiled opposition members said the unemployment rate is higher than the official rate and was one of the main causes for the unrest, but the government denies this.

The government has tried to create jobs since the five-month wave of unrest ended in April.

It has also tried to encourage more jobs for Bahrainis at the expense of foreigners.

In the last ten months the number of Bahraini workers has increased by 8.7 per cent, while the number of expatriate workers has dropped by 3.5 per cent, according to official figures.

A total of 540,000 people live in Bahrain, including 200,000 foreigners.

The Abu Dhabi Development Fund, meanwhile, has decided to help revive the economy, by financing the construction of a port for the new Al Hidd industrial zone as well as a power station to meet growing industrial demand.

No figures were disclosed.

Minister warns French strike impact 'catastrophic'

PARIS (R) — France's industry minister warned Saturday that public sector strikes, now in their ninth day, could have "catastrophic" consequences for French business and threaten jobs.

Strikes which have paralysed the railways and are spreading gradually to other services put France's convalescent economy at risk, Franck Borotra said in a television interview.

"Fifty per cent of the economic activity of small and medium businesses in the Paris region is blocked, and this means fragility for people's jobs," Mr. Borotra said.

Big stores and small businesses reported sharp drops in sales as anti-austerity strikes wore into their second weekend, bringing the traditional pre-Christmas shopping rush to a crawl.

"I hope people will think about the fact that you cannot take risks with an economy in convalescence," Mr. Borotra said on LCI cable television.

Private companies started to lay off staff last week and the centre-right government warned strikers Friday that more firms would send workers home if the chaos continued.

Economists expect the disruption to knock output sharply in the fourth quarter, injuring the economy's faltering growth.

One said Friday gross domestic product, or national output, could shrink by as much as 0.4 per cent in the current quarter after limping ahead by 0.2 per cent in the third term.

Unions called the strikes to protest against Prime Minister Alain Juppe's plans to raise taxes to wipe out a social security deficit and help France qualify for a single European currency.

A total of 80 out of 139 postal sorting offices were hit Saturday as the strike spread to the mail and other utilities.

The strike that has crippled France's public transport system is starting to take a serious toll on industry as companies unable to ship products or receive supplies began Friday to send workers home.

The steel, chemicals, agro-industry and car sectors are among the hardest hit by the strike called against welfare cuts and state industry restructuring.

Carmaker PSA Peugeot Citroen Friday laid off more than two-thirds of the 11,800 workers at its Mulhouse assembly plant for a day after running out of space to store finished cars normally transported to dealers by rail.

A subsidiary of the Eridania Beghin-Say food giant said it might have to shut down a vital starch manufacturing plant in northern France and shift production outside the country.

Some industries had their power supplies interrupted by striking Electricite de France workers as unrest spread to other services, including post.

"The strike at the postal service will aggravate the situation for companies by disrupting order, bills, payments, everything that goes through the mail," said Jean-Marc Zakhia, a spokesman at the CNPF employers federation.

France's government warned striking public transport workers more companies would lay off staff if the disruption continued.

"France needs to work. Our economy is still convalescent," government spokesman Alain Lamassoure said in a statement.

He said the retail sector had been particularly hard hit in the vital Christmas shopping season by the nationwide strike.

Big department stores reported sales drops of between 40 and 50 per cent since the strike began last Friday.

Alternative sources of transport — airlines, trucking and shipping — were in big demand but not always able to cope.

Air traffic was disrupted at Paris's second airport as striking maintenance workers blocked runways. Unions pressured truck drivers to strike in solidarity.

River barge traffic eased some of the paralysis but capacity was tight because the autumn season is one of the busiest.

Flour mills scrambled to switch their supply lines to roads and waterways from rail, which handles much of France's 53 million tonnes annual grain output. Flour deliveries to Paris bakeries were delayed in mammoth traffic jams.

Producers of dangerous chemicals were strapped as some of their products cannot safely be switched off the railways.

Yugoslav central bank aims for export economy

BELGRADE (R) — Rump Yugoslavia's central bank chief has predicted a new reform package enacted this week would boost exports and lay the foundation for a proposed privatisation of state-owned industry.

Dragoslav Avramovic, governor of the Federal National Bank, said in an interview the devaluation of the dinar and cuts in tariffs should lead to a rise in exports following the suspension of U.N. sanctions against Belgrade.

"One move, combined with the lifting of sanctions, will result in a higher volume of exports and certainly higher receipts for already existing exports," said Mr. Avramovic.

The dinar was brought into line with the black market rate on Sunday, with banks offering 3.3 dinars to one mark.

Mr. Avramovic did not say by how much he expected exports to rise.

In[illegible] economists pre[illegible] nomic outlook. They say more radical reforms — such [illegible] system — are needed to support a sus[illegible] exports.

[illegible] Yugoslav republics which [illegible] on vigorous free [illegible] economy. [illegible] force the government and it [illegible] to make sim[illegible] reforms, he said.

[illegible] ler firms more competitive, eliminating complex and expensive payment arrangements.

The devaluation has been holding so far on the black market and Mr. Avramovic said he expected the dinar to remain stable.

"It's (the devaluation) been well received. There has been no panic... we confirmed the situation which already existed."

Rump Yugoslavia — Serbia and Montenegro — planned to stick to a tight monetary policy and the National Bank will "freeze" the primary money supply, said Mr. Avramovic.

"We hope we can create an atmosphere that this is here to stay, that hard money will stay," he said.

Mr. Avramovic became a popular figure in Serbia when he devised a successful programme two years ago that conquered a devastating bout of hyperinflation.

He had to water down his latest reform measures this month after meeting resistance from ruling socialists, who delayed any action on privatisation.

Mr. Avramovic said this week's measures would foster more competition and create "momentum" for privatisation, or what he calls "democratisation of ownership."

"The (reforms) have given an impetus for change," he said.

EU plans to offer E. Europe second class membership

BRUSSELS (AFP) — The integration of eastern European states into the European Union (EU) will be subject to lengthy transition periods during which their rights will fall short of those enjoyed by current members, according to proposals from the European Commission.

The need for transitional periods to prevent the planned enlargement from proving prohibitively expensive for the Union's farm and regional aid budgets was the dominant theme of two strategy documents which will be submitted to a summit of EU leaders in Madrid this month.

The growing realisation of the problems associated with granting countries like Poland or Hungary membership was also reflected in a warning from Commission President Jacques Santer that the doors to the east could not be opened without "substantial reform," of EU institutions.

"We have to make a success of deepening before we can look at enlargement," Mr. Santer said.

Proposals to streamline the EU's decision-making will be discussed during next year's intergovernmental conference (IGC).

But moves such as reducing the scope of national veto[illegible] increasing the powers of the European Parliament are fiercely opposed by Britain and stand little chance of winning the required unanimous backing.

The Commission president has also recently linked the start of entry negotiations with the eastern Europeans to a successful renegotiation of a new EU budget, which will not happen until 1999.

Advocates of speedy enlargement want negotiations to begin as soon as the IGC is over with the aim of bringing the first countries in as soon as the year 2000.

Agriculture Commissioner Franz Fischler said extending the EU's current system of farm subsidies to the ten eastern European countries that have signed association agreements would add 12 billion ECU ($15.8 billion) to the annual budget by 2010.

The Commission declined to publish its estimate of the cost of applying its system of aid to the four poorest countries in the Union to the impoverished east, understood to be a colossal 38 billion ECU ($49.4 billion) per year.

Both the total cost and the fact that Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Spain, the main beneficiaries of current EU aid, would suddenly find themselves at the back of the queue make this politically impossible.

"Enlargement without guarantees of cohesion funds for the four poorest countries would be socially unacceptable and politically unthinkable," said Monika Wulf Mathies, commissioner for the regions.

To prevent this and to cope with enlargement, the commission is proposing ongoing reform of the CAP coupled with measures to help the eastern Europeans modernise their agricultural sectors during the transitional period.

THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen

"I achieved one of my career goals today. I played computer poker all day without getting caught."

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirion

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

RHOBA

KOVEE

TRAPIE

ROHTAU

Form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here :

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: LEAKY TRIPE ICEBOX ACTUAL
Answer: What the angry chickens gave the farmer — A PECK OF TROUBLE

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1995

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Be more sympathetic with those at home at this time and improve conditions there considerably. You should not be so critical of loved ones.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Finding the correct solution to perplexing matters is wise in the morning today and later this evening be very conscientious.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You may feel a lack so get [illegible] and find the right way to have greater income. Be more willing to work hard for you to be [illegible]

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Stop feeling so sorry for yourself at this time since this only a habit you had better get out of for your own good or you could feel miserable.

LEO :(July 22 to August 21) Some secret affair has to be cleared up quickly today so that you need not feel so concerned. Think seriously and do it.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Being more objective is wise or you could get confused over a friend's emotional difficulties. Get to the heart of matters.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Be very tactful in dealing with others today, especially the powerful, as you travel about. Handle credit matters wisely.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Stop worrying over what you can do little about today and stedy new enterprises which could be profitable for you.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Concentrate on separating business from other affairs at this time so that you can gain that feeling of security and suc-

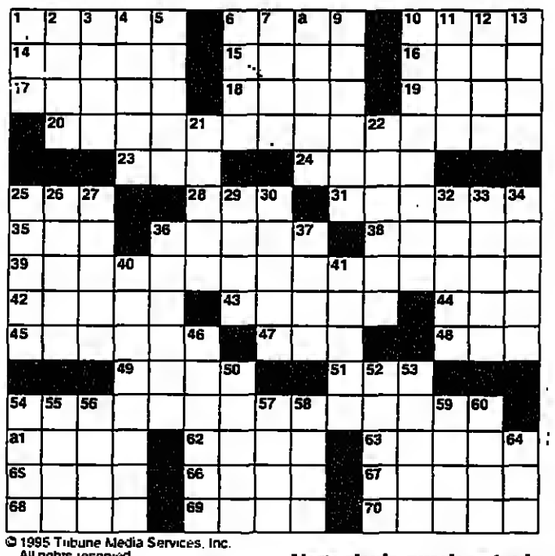
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have to be tactful with one who is sensitive today and later tonight if you want to reach an agreement with this person.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) It would be wise to forget business and other practical affairs at this time and later tonight rest up for a busy work ahead.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You may find today that a usually helpful friend may put a damper on the good time you had planned. Take it in your stride.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

The Daily Crossword by Alvin L. Becker



ACROSS
1 Equal
6 Tab
10 Ogden the poet
14 Without — in the world
15 Put [illegible] ship
16 [illegible]mber of the orchestra
17 Fudd of cartoons
18 Opera tune
19 Walked heavily
20 Path to success?
23 Holy woman: abbr.
24 Weight allowance
25 Boastful talk
28 Liquid meas.
31 Rio —
35 Somewhat: suff.
36 Certain horse
38 Expend
39 Not too bright
42 Upstanding
43 What ghosts do
44 "Lighthorse Harry"
45 Fugitive
47 Tachometer letters
48 Feminine suffix
49 Joint
51 Residue
54 Bakery item
61 Laborer
62 [illegible] a meal
63 [illegible] size
65 Wrongful act
66 Shower of TV
67 Carries on
68 Aware of
69 Small weapon
70 Whim

DOWN
1 Murray of old films
2 Lawyers' gp.
3 Press down
4 Work gangs
6 Attired
7 Injure
8 Simp
9 Pekoe holder
10 Last, but —
11 Dugout
12 Chimney stuff
13 Ms. Lamarr
21 Lear's daughter
22 Burst violently
25 Thingamajig
26 "...lady known —" (Service)
27 Rudely brief
29 Pituitary hormone
30 Composer Franz
32 Greasy of football fame
33 Fists
34 Fleurets
36 — China (pig)
37 Enlist again
40 "— my parlor," said the spider...
41 Deprive of [illegible]rage
46 Tended to a garden
50 MN city
52 Neck piece
53 "— the Horrible" (cartoon)
54 Prepared for
55 Laborer
56 Cull
57 — about (approximately)
58 Occident
59 "Citizen —"
60 Musical James
64 Northern native: abbr.

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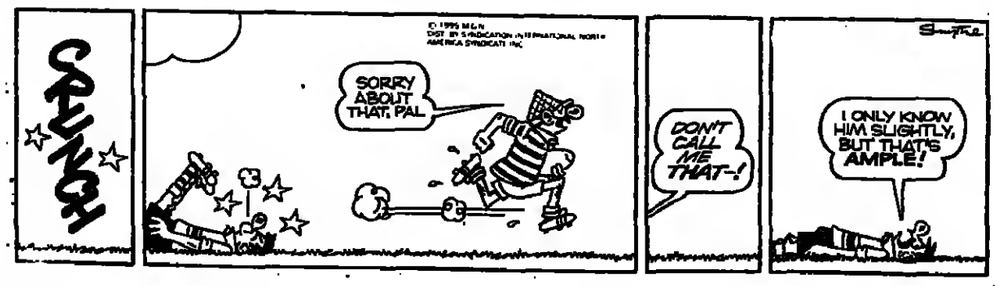
Yesterday's puzzle solved:

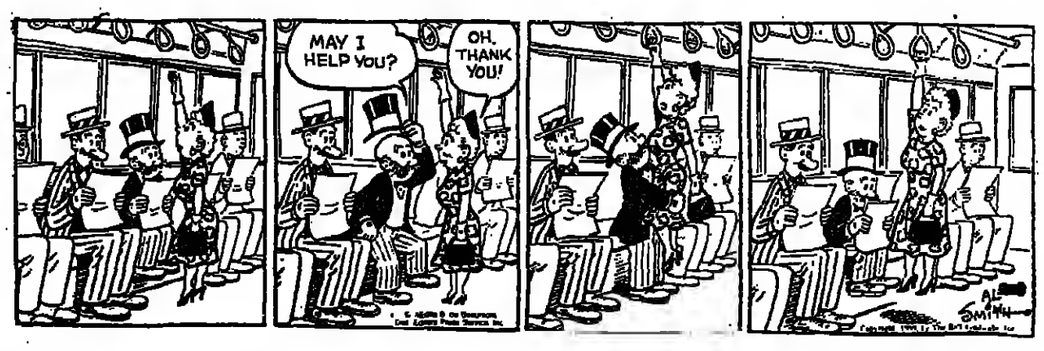
A	R	T	S		B	A	B	E		R	E	A	M	S
P	E	R	T		R	E	E	D		E	C	L	A	T
P	L	I	E		A	R	E	S		D	O	I	L	Y
T	E	L	E	P	H	O	N	E		U	N	T	I	E
S	E	L	O	O	M		L	O	C	O				
				S	S	T	S		D	E	M	U	R	S
S	L	I	M	E		R	U	L	E		I	S	E	E
H	O	N	O	R		I	N	A		S	C	E	N	T
A	G	O	N		T	O	U	R		E	S	S	E	S
M	O	N	O	D	Y		P	A	C	T				
			T	I	E	S			H	U	G	H	E	S
L	A	B	O	R		M	E	G	A	P	H	O	N	E
A	M	I	N	E		A	L	E	S		A	N	N	A
M	A	N	E	S		S	L	O	T		N	E	U	T
A	N	G	S	T		H	A	L	E		A	S	I	S

Peanuts

Andy Capp



Mutt 'n' Jeff



BHP to merge with Magma to create new copper giant

SYDNEY (R) — Broken Hill Pty Co. Ltd, Australia's largest industrial and natural resources company, has announced plans to create the world's second biggest copper producer by agreeing to buy U.S.-based Magma Copper Co.

The 3.2 billion Australian dollar ($2.4 billion) deal, the largest takeover of a foreign company by an Australian firm, will give the multinational resources group 10 per cent of the Western world's copper production, BHP said in a statement.

The new company, BHP Copper Group, will produce around 900,000 tonnes of copper annually in 1996 and possibly 1.1 million tonnes in 1997, BHP chief executive John Prescott said.

The world's top copper producer remains Chilean state-owned Codelco, with annual output of over one million tonnes.

"We think this is a very good fit with BHP and we are very exited about it," he told reporters. The new BHP division will be led by Magma's current president and chief executive J. Burgess Winter.

Under the terms of the agreement, Melbourne-based BHP will offer $28 cash per outstanding Magma common share and two series of convertible preferred stock, the companies said in a joint statement released in New York and Sydney.

BHP said it would pay 2.5 billion Australian dollar ($1.8 billion) to buy Magma's stock. The total cost of the acquisition will be higher because BHP has agreed to assume Magma's debt.

The offer for Magma's shares will begin on or before Dec. 5 and should be completed by mid-January, BHP said.

Magma's board unanimously approved the bid and recommended its shareholders accept BHP's offer. Warburg Pincus Capital Co., Magma's largest shareholder with a 26 per cent stake, has agreed to sell its shares to BHP, the companies said.

Most analysts welcomed the deal and described Arizona-based Magma as a positive strategic fit for BHP, delivering the Australian company control of one of North America's biggest, lowest-cost copper smelters at Magma's San Manuel plant.

"It's a good strategic fit with BHP's copper business," said Elaine Prior, analyst at Melbourne-based broker Mcintosh Securities. "They are complementary business."

Currently BHP has no customers in the United States, shipping most of its copper concentrate to Japan from its 58 per cent-owned Escondida mine in Chile and 52 per cent Ok Tedi mine in Papua New Guinea.

The deal is expected to accelerate BHP's drive into processing copper, bolstering its reserves to around 24 million tonnes with the addition of Magma's U.S. mines in Nevada and Arizona and the Tintaya mine in Peru, the analysts said.

The analysts added that Magma would also help BHP pursue several undeveloped copper resources, including oxide reserves at Escondida and a sulphide deposit at Zaldivar in Chile.

But some analysts cautioned the wisdom of buying into copper production at a time when the price of the metal has been extremely volatile and the outlook cloudy. They described it as a vote of confidence in the metal's price.

"Over time it should prove to be a sensible acquisition," said Prudential Bache Australia analyst Tim Gerrard. "If BHP had waited for the copper price to fall further it may have missed this opportunity."

"I think it's a tick for the copper market for BHP to make a move like this," said Austock Brokers analyst Oliver Messenger.

"All the forecasts are for the price to soften but the Chinese market and Asian tigers are still pretty copper hungry and there is still a lot of demand there," he said.

Financial Markets

Jordan Times
In co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close Date 30/11	Tokyo Close Date 1/12
Sterling Pound*	1.5315	1.5310
Deutsche Mark	1.4474	1.4467
Swiss Franc	1.1765	1.1775
French Franc	4.9983	4.9980
Japanese Yen	101.10	101.19
European Currency Unit	1.2760	1.2763

* USD Per STG
** European Opening @ 5:00 a.m. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates Date: 2/12/1995

Currency	1 MTHS	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	5.68	5.54	5.43	5.37
Sterling Pound	6.43	6.31	6.18	6.18
Deutsche Mark	3.81	3.62	3.56	3.50
Swiss Franc	2.06	1.93	1.62	1.36
French Franc	3.68	3.68	3.62	3.60
Japanese Yen	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25
European Currency Unit	5.43	5.37	5.28	5.21

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Precious Metals Date:

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm*	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	386.65	7.50	Silver	5.21	0.101

* 21 Karat

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Dated: 2/12/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.708	0.710
Sterling Pound	1.0828	1.0882
Deutsche Mark	0.48900	0.4914
Swiss Franc	0.6007	0.6037
French Franc	0.1415	0.1422
Japanese Yen*	0.6968	0.7023
Dutch Guilder	0.4368	0.4390
Swedish Krona	----	----
Italian Lira*	0.0441	0.0443
Belgian Franc	----	----

* Per 100

Other Currencies Date: 2/12/1995

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.8620	1.8780
Lebanese Lira*	0.044100	0.04460
Saudi Riyal	0.1870	0.1898
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.3870	2.3870
Qatari Riyal	0.1932	0.1945
Egyptian Pound	0.2100	0.2200
Omani Riyal	1.8350	1.8410
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1933
Greek Drachma*	0.2800	0.2907

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Friday.

One U.S. dollar	1.3652/62	Canadian dollar
	1.4448/58	Deutschemarks
	1.6168/78	Dutch guilders
	1.1744/54	Swiss francs
	29.69/73	Belgian francs
	4.9974/24	French francs
	1600.3/108	Italian lire
	101.25/35	Japanese yen
	6.5430/30	Swedish crowns
	6.3600/50	Norwegian crowns
	5.5877/77	Danish crowns
	1.4140/50	Singapore dollars
	0.7389/94	Australian dollars
	7.7355/65	Hong Kong dollars
One sterling	$1.5296/06	
One ounce of gold	$386.00/386.50	

Leeson gets 6½ jail sentence

SINGAPORE (R) — Former whiz-kid trader Nick Leeson, whose disastrous derivatives dealings brought down Barings Bank under debts of some $1.4 billion, was sentenced by a Singapore court on Saturday to six-and-a-half years in prison.

Judge Richard Magnus said the 28-year-old Briton had used his position of trust to trade dishonestly and had "spun a web of deceit."

The sentence surprised some lawyers who had anticipated a term of between two and four years, and disappointed some Singaporeans who felt Leeson should have received a longer jail term.

Leeson appeared unfazed by the sentence and smiled as he left the courthouse for a maximum-security jail.

The sentence for two charges of cheating was close to the maximum eight years. But nine months he served in a suburban Frankfurt jail pending extradition will be deducted, and legal sources said be may actually serve as little as three-and-a-half to four years with time off for good behaviour.

Leeson pleaded guilty to the two chrges Friday after prosecutors said they would not proceed with nine other fraud and forgery connts which could have added a further six years to his sentence.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET
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ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 02/12/1995

COMPANY'S NAME	NO. OF SHARES TRADED	VALUE TRADED JD	PREV. CLOSING PRICE	CLOSING PRICE
ARAB BANK PLC	540	122360	223.750	229.000
JORDAN NATIONAL BANK	2500	10796	4.320	4.320
CAIRO AMMAN BANK	5300	23055	4.500	4.350
MIDDLE EAST INVESTMENT BANK.	5000	5550	1.100	1.110
INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT BANK	2300	5625	2.450	2.450
THE HOUSING BANK	525	2271	4.350	4.330
JORDAN KUWAIT BANK	511	1352	2.650	2.650
JORDAN GULF BANK	19976	21970	1.090	1.100
JORDAN ISLAMIC BANK	1070	3688	3.370	3.380
BUSINESS BANK	3150	10233	3.250	3.220
AMMAN BANK FOR INVESTMENT	19650	17825	.890	.910
PHILADELPHIA INVESTMENT BANK.	1100	1696	1.530	1.540
BANKS SECTOR	61633	226467	INDEX NUMBER: 181.39 CHANGE : +1.73%	
JERUSALEM INSURANCE	100	400	4.000	4.000
AL-NISR AL-ARABI INSURANCE	258	1066	4.000	4.200
INSURANCE SECTOR	358	1466	INDEX NUMBER: 128.75 CHANGE : +0.43%	
JORDANIAN ELECTRIC POWER	11222	18002	1.600	1.600
NATIONAL PORTFOLIO SECURITIES	3460	6044	1.710	1.750
UNITED MIDDLE EAST & COMMODORE HOTELS	1340	2830	2.080	2.150
ARAB INTER. FOR INVESTMENT & EDUCATION	300	969	3.230	3.230
ZARKA PRIVATE UNIVERSITY	5400	6358	1.160	1.180
UNION LAND DEVELOPMENT CORP.	1000	950	.950	.950
SERVICES SECTON	22810	35263	INDEX NUMBER: 123.62 CHANGE : +0.33%	
THE JORDAN CEMENT FACTORIES	8237	28884	3.500	3.490
JORDAN PETROLEUM REFINARY	1257	11370	9.020	9.040
THE INDUSTRIAL COMMERCIAL & AGRICULTURAL	15065	49997	3.310	3.310
THE JORDAN WORSTED MILLS	636	4516	7.150	7.100
ARAB PHARMACEUTICAL MANUFACTURING	650	2768	4.260	4.260
JORDAN DAIRY	1050	2625	2.500	2.500
THE JORDAN PIPES MANUFACTURING	400	938	2.350	2.350
THE PUBLIC MINING	150	417	2.800	2.780
SPINNING & WEAVING	1873	3093	1.690	1.680
DAR AL DAWA DEVELOPMENT & INVESTMENT	754	5002	6.640	6.640
ARAB ALUMINIUM INDUSTRY	300	1559	5.150	5.200
LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	32588	19718	.590	.600
ARAB PAPER CONVERTING & TRADING	9850	13262	1.340	1.350
NATIONAL INDUSTRIES	4950	4815	.970	.980
INTERMEDIATE PETRO-CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES	5000	8400	1.650	1.680
JORDAN DOCKWOOL INDUSTRIES	1100	1089	1.000	.990
JORDAN SULPHO-CHEMICALS	2000	2388	1.190	1.200
ARAB CENTER FOR PHARM. & CHEMICALS	1950	3340	1.710	1.710
UNIVERSAL MODERN INDUSTRIES	1000	2929	2.920	2.940
JORDAN INDUSTRIAL RESOURCES CO.	4100	7052	1.690	1.720
JORDAN NEW CABLE COMPANY	3650	5129	1.400	1.390
INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO & CIGARETTES	26150	34655	1.320	1.330
UNION CHEMICAL & VEGETIABLE OIL INDUSTRI	1130	1960	1.590	1.670
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR	123890	215908	INDEX NUMBER: 117.64 CHANGE : +0.04%	
GRAND TOTAL	208691	479105	INDEX NUMBER: 150.30 CHANGE : +1.07%	

NO. OF TRADED SHARES IN PARALLEL MARKET : 124510
VALUE TRADED IN PARALLEL MARKET : 121299

DAILY

A review of news from the Arabic press

Foodstuff traders explain reasons for higher prices

☆☆ THE GENERAL Association for Traders of Foodstuffs submitted a memorandum to the Ministry of Supply demanding that prices of meat, cheese and tea be floated and left to market forces of supply and demand. If this request could not be met, the memorandum demanded that new prices be fixed for only two months. The memorandum explained that the higher prices of meat came as a result of European countries reducing their subsidies for meat, milk products and cheese over the past five months. The reduction in subsidies for beef and frozen meat started with a five per cent in July. A further 3.5 per cent and five per cent reduction followed in October and November respectively. On Nov. 18, subsidies were reduced by an additional 25 per cent, bringing the total reduction in subsidies to 41 per cent.

As such, the memorandum said prices of meat imports have risen as follows:
1) $400 a tonne for live calves;
2) $700 a tonne for fresh beef;
3) $1,000 per tonne for frozen boneless beef.

In addition, higher transportation fares have added to the increase in prices, the association said.

The association complained of large samples which are taken for laboratory tests and said they cost the equivalent of JD 500 from each container and that such an extra cost is borne by the consumer. Another complaint was of the many bureaucratic measures which cause delays and, consequently, result in extra costs from storage and interest (Al Dustour).

Lawzi shows agriculture sector development from 60s to 90s

☆☆ ACCORDING TO Salem Al Lawzi, director-general of the Agricultural Marketing Organisation, planted areas under irrigation have increased from 450,000 dunums in 1960s to about 780,000 dunums at present. The volume of vegetable and fruit production also went up from 350,000 tonnes in the 60s to about two million tonnes at present. Agricultural exports amounted to 100,000 tonnes three decades ago but now Jordanian farms exports have reached 600,000 tonnes in 1990 earning the Kingdom nearly JD 100 million. (Al Ra'i).

Board of directors inspect work of Nippon Jordan Fertilizer Company

☆☆ THE BOARD of directors of Nippon Jordan Fertilizer Company Ltd (NJFC) held its fourteenth meeting last week at NJFC office on site in Aqaba. The meeting was headed by Chairman Sameh Madani, managing director of Jordan Phosphate Mines company. The board listened to a detailed explanation from the managing director Masatoshi Muranaka, on the progress and development of work regarding the compound fertilizer project which is to be executed by the company. The board also reviewed other administrative and financial matters and appropriate decisions were taken regarding these issues. The board of directors toured the site of the project and reviewed the progress of work which was developing in parallel to the planned schedule. The board expressed its appreciation for the efforts exerted by all the employees on the project. The board of directors went to see the land on which the employees housing city is to be built, and expressed their eagerness to speed up the execution work of this housing city in view to the important service provided to the employees of the company. Nippon Jordan Fertilizer Company is a joint venture between Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, Arab Potash Company on one hand and another four Japanese companies and corporations, with a capital of $24 million, 60 per cent of it is owned by the Japanese side and which is aimed at setting up a plant to produce compound fertilizers at the free zone area in Aqaba with a capacity of 300,000 tonnes and with a total investment of around $84.5 million.

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Hakkinen leaves hospital

ADELAIDE (R) — Finnish driver Mika Hakkinen, critically hurt in a crash at last month's Australian Grand Prix, was discharged from hospital on Saturday and headed home to Monaco.

Hakkinen left the Royal Adelaide hospital with two doctors who would travel with him to Monaco, hospital spokesman David Walsh said.

"He is steadily improving. He still has some rehabilitation to go through but the staff at the hospital are extremely happy with his progress," Walsh said.

Hakkinen left Adelaide airport with his girlfriend Erja Honkanen and his personal manager aboard a hospital-leased jet with special medical equipment, Walsh said.

Hakkinen told the Adelaide Advertiser newspaper he had set his sights on returning for the opening round of the 1996 formula one season next March.

In his first interview since the accident, Hakkinen said he was still committed to racing but feared aggravating his serious concussion.

"It (the crash) hasn't changed my mind about racing but at the moment I'm scared: I'm scared of what might happen if I slip and hang my head again," the McLaren driver said in the interview, published on Saturday.

"The next one to one-and-a-half months is the critical time and the doctors tell me I shouldn't hit my head again. It is still sore and if I do too much sport my head aches," he said.

"I'm very lucky to be in the situation I'm in at the moment. At least I can walk and do things normally and the doctors say I will make a full recovery," he said.

Hakkinen crashed into a wall at high speed during qualifying on Adelaide's street circuit before the final race of the season.

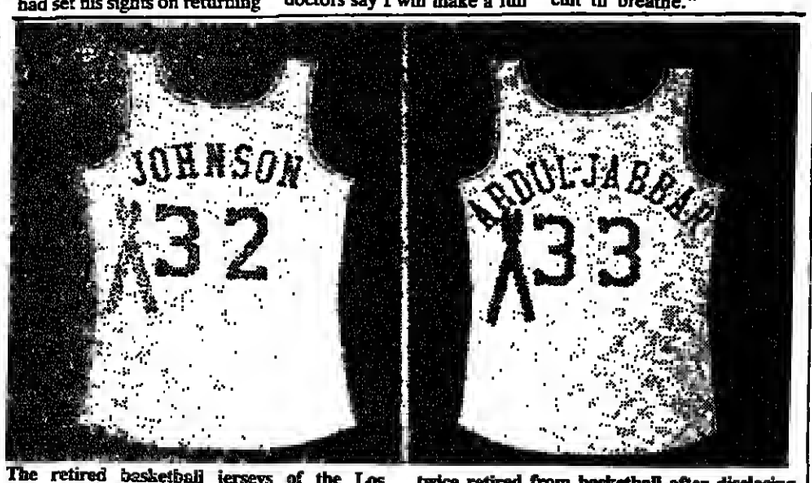
Asked about his prospects of driving again, Hakkinen said: "Maybe melbourne (the Australian Grand Prix on March 10)... it depends."

The Advertiser said Hakkinen's last memory of the crash on November 10 was when he "lost" the back end of his car when a rear tyre deflated, apparently after being cut by debris.

Travelling at 270 kph, the car crashed into a tyre and concrete barrier.

"I cannot remember after that," Hakkinen told the newspaper.

"But I remember at some point, whether it was straight after or at the hospital, I don't know, that it was difficult to breathe."



The retired basketball jerseys of the Los Angeles Lakers Earvin 'Magic' Johnson and Kareem Abdul Jabbar are donned with red AIDS awareness ribbons on Friday, as part of World AIDS Awareness Day. Johnson has twice retired from basketball after disclosing he is HIV positive. A new education campaign by U.S. officials was kicked off at rallies across the country, stressing the need for prevention (Reuters photo)

Nets on the road to recovery

BOSTON (R) — Kenny Anderson helped put New Jersey on the road to recovery Friday as he scored 39 points to lift the Nets to a 131-123 overtime victory over the Boston Celtics.

Vern Fleming sank five free throws in the final 99 seconds of overtime to help seal the win for New Jersey, who posted their first road victory of the season after eight losses.

"I didn't take it upon myself — I just stepped it up," said Anderson. "We just wanted to win this game. I was just doing my thing."

Armon Gilliam added 20 points and 11 rebounds for the Nets, who played with just nine men after the six-player trade that sent superstar Derrick Coleman to the 76ers.

New Jersey (6-8) had lost their first eight road contests by an average of 17.8 points.

Rick Fox scored 33 points with 10 rebounds for Boston.

The Nets blew a 17-point fourth-quarter lead as Boston went on a 13-0 run to extend the game.

But the Celtics (5-8) went cold in overtime.

"It's the same old thing like it has been for the last two years," said Celtics guard Dee Brown. "We don't play hard consistently. If we don't play hard we will never win."

In Atlanta, Jamal Mashburn scored 13 of his 33 points in a key third-quarter run and Jimmy Jackson added 28 as the Dallas Mavericks defeated the Atlanta Hawks 106-98 for their first road victory that snapped a seven-game losing streak.

Scott Brooks scored 11 points for Dallas (6-8), who also won on the road for the first time in six games.

"We rebounded and played defence," Jackson said. "We knew we had to break this thing, but didn't press. We laughed and had fun, starting from today's film session. Everybody feels that's the team of old."

Steve Smith scored 26 points for Atalanta (10-5).

In Miami, Keith Askins scored seven of his career-high 21 points in overtime as the Miami Heat defeated the Charlotte Hornets 108-101 for their fourth straight victory.

It was the first game between the teams since they engineered a six-player trade on the first day of the season featuring Alonzo Mourning going to the Heat and Glen Rice and Khalid Reeves joining Charlotte.

Mourning had 21 points and 11 rebounds. Rice finished with 22 points, while Reeves came off the bench to add seven.

In Phoenix, Kevin Johnson scored nine of his 26 points in the fourth quarter and Wesley Person added 22 as the Phoenix Suns continued their domination of the Minnesota Timberwolves with a 111-105 victory.

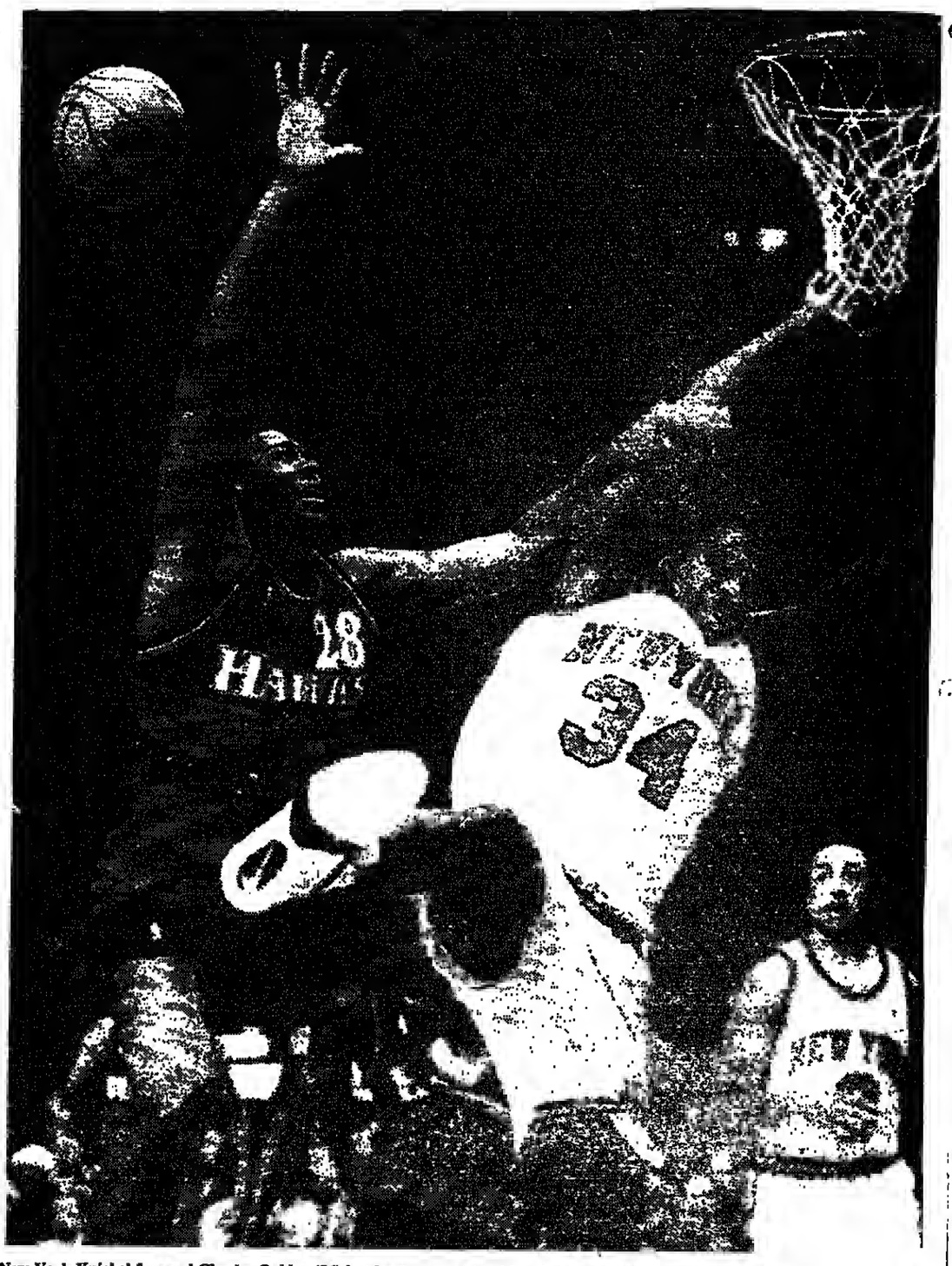
Charles Barkley had 18 points and 11 rebounds, and A.C. green scored 14 points and hauled down 13 boards for Phoenix, which improved to 25-0 against expansion Minnesota.

Sean Rooks went 7-of-8 from the field as he scored 19 points off the bench and Isaiah Rider added 18 for Minnesota.

In Seattle, Shawn Kemp scored 27 points and Vincent Askew scored eight of his 10 in a second-quarter run as the Seattle Supersonics defeated the Milwaukee Bucks 110-99. Milwaukee led 36-31 after Terry Cummings hit one of two free throws, but Seattle responded with a 13-0 run to take control of the game as they posted their eighth straight victory over the Bucks.

In Toronto, Willie Anderson scored 15 of his 23 points in the first quarter as the Toronto Raptors raced to an early 25-point lead and held off the Philadelphia 76ers 105-102.

Alvin Robertson scored 22 points and Oliver Miller added 20 for Toronto, which won its fourth consecutive home game. Rookie Damon Stoudamire scored 15 points and handed out 10 assists for the Raptors.



New York Knicks' forward Charles Oakley (34) battles for the ball with Atlanta Hawks' centre Andrew Lang during action in the first half of their NBA game (Reuters photo)

NBA RESULTS

Toronto	105	Philadelphia	102
New Jersey	131	Boston	123 (OT)
Miami	108	Charlotte	101
Dallas	106	Atlanta	98
Phoenix	111	Minnesota	105
Seattle	110	Milwaukee	99
L.A Lakers	113	Vancouver	100

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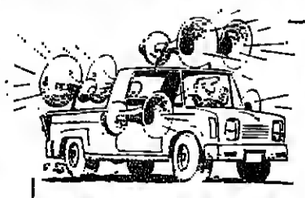

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NORTH
♠ K 10 6 3
♡ K J 10 8 3
◇ J
♣ A K 8

WEST
♠ 9 8 2
♡ 7 6 2
◇ K Q 10 6 5 4 2
♣ Void

EAST
♠ Void
♡ A Q 9 5
◇ 9 7
♣ J 9 7 6 5 3 2

SOUTH
♠ A Q J 7 5 4
♡ 4
◇ A 6 3
♣ Q 10 4

The bidding:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
3◇	Dbl	Pass	4◇
Pass	4♡	Pass	5♠
Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Opening lead. King of ◇

Study the auction and play of this slam contract, then decide who, if anyone, should be charged with an error, and what it was.

To start with, East deserves a demerit for passing the double of three diamonds. We would have bid three hearts as a lead-director but, even though that could have defeated the slam, it merits only a mild rebuke. The rest of the auction cannot be criticized.

West led the king of diamonds, taken by the ace. Declarer cashed the ace of spades to learn about the 3-0 break. A diamond was ruffed in dummy, declarer returned to hand with a high trump and ruffed the remaining diamond with the table's last trump. When declarer tried to get back to hand with a club to draw the last trump, West ruffed and shifted to a heart, and East's ace was the setting trick.

Declarer was very unlucky to get a 3-0 trump split and to have the first round of clubs get ruffed. However, South's timing was just a little off. The contract should have been made regardless.

After winning the ace of diamonds, declarer should ruff a diamond with the 10 of trumps to avoid the possibility of an overruff, then return to hand with the ace of spades. When the trump break is disclosed, it is a simple matter to ruff a diamond with the king and use dummy's remaining trump as an entry to hand to extract West's remaining fangs. Having eliminated any possibility of a defensive ruff, the only loser would be a heart.

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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA CONCORD TEL: 677420
CONCORD "1"
Nadia Al Jundi, Farouq Fishawi and Mahmoud Hamideh ...in A Woman Who shook the Throne of Egypt
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:30
CONCORD "2"
Sylvester Stallone..in ASSASSINS
Shows: 3:30, 6, 8:15, 10:15

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Brazilian Rai (left) of Paris St. Germain controls the ball ahead of Yannick Baret (right) of Guingamp during early action in their French League match (Reuters photo)

Newcomers hold up mighty PSG

PARIS (Agencies) — The village upstarts of Guingamp held up mighty Paris St. Germain's march towards the French League title when they held the giants from the capital to a goalless draw on Friday.

More than 15,000 fans, almost double the population of Guingamp, crowded into the stadium to see the clash between the club which was playing in the third division only two years ago and the Paris millionaires.

But the match proved evenly-balanced and, even though Parisian coach Luis Fernandez boldly played four men up front, there were no goals for the visitors.

The result cut PSG's league lead from seven to six points after Lens jumped from fourth to second with a 2-0 win over Metz, who had started the day in third place.

A first half goal from Frederic Meyrieu and one in the second period from Cameroon striker Marc-Vivien Foe carried the day for Lens, who play Slavia Prague in the UEFA Cup on Thursday.

Metz were not the only away team to suffer on a miserable night for visiting teams. Lyon, who play Nottingham Forest in the UEFA Cup on Tuesday, were the only away side to score but they still went down 2-1 in Montpellier.

Nantes, who play a crucial Champions' League fixture with Panathinaikos of Greece on Wednesday, boosted their morale with a comfortable 3-0 win over Martigues.

Nicolas Quedec opened the scoring just before the break and late goals from Reynald Pedros and Benoit Canet sealed an impressive victory.

The result put the defending champions into fifth place, nine points behind the leaders.

Bastia beat Lille 4-0 with a brace of goals each from Bruno Rodriguez and Anton Drobnjak, the Montenegrin who now leads the goalscorers' table with 14 strikes this season.

Cannes jumped off the bottom of the table with a 3-0 win over Rennes which carried them out of the last three and the relegation zone.

Grobbelaar suspended

SOUTHAMPTON (AFP) — Controversial goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar, currently facing charges of match-rigging, was suspended by his club Southampton on Saturday for failing to show up for a league match.

The Premiership club handed out the maximum penalty for the troubled Zimbabwe international — banning him for two weeks and fining him two weeks wages.

The club are upset that the player they have stood by during the current match-rigging allegations failed to return from international duty as promised.

Grobbelaar had promised "hand on heart" to return to the club last Friday, 24 November but did not appear until the following Tuesday.

His absence forced the club to play last week's Premiership match against Bolton at the Dell with three outfield players as subs.

Manager Dave Merrington was furious after bending over backwards to allow Grobbelaar to attend the international tournament in South Africa.

He said: "I feel very let down. He promised faithfully that he would be back on Friday morning.

"I insisted that I wanted him back on Friday for the Bolton game because it was such an important match.

"I went out on a limb for him to let him to go and he gave me his solemn oath hand on heart he would be back.

"Zimbabwe asked him to stay on for the weekend but that is not on and I had no hesitation giving him the maximum punishment for a breach of club rules," he added.

Downhill champion wins opener

VAIL, Colorado (R) — Luc Alphand of France opened defence of his World Cup downhill title in grand style Friday, winning the season's openings race in dramatic fashion.

Strategically choosing a later start position because of superb conditions, Alphand raced without error from the 27th starting spot to win with a time of one minute 37.93 seconds.

Lasse Kjus of Norway once again missed his first career World Cup victory, clocking 1:38.47. It was the eighth time the Norwegian has been runner-up in a race.

Patrick Ortlieb of Austria was third in 1:38.61.

Fourth place went to Xavier Gigandet of Switzerland in 1:38.74 and Fredrik Nyberg of Sweden was a surprising fifth from the 63rd start position in 1:38.76.

Austria's Roland Assinger, a newcomer who had raced well in training, was sixth, marking himself as a man to watch.

Alphand was a cool, calm and collected winner.

"I had no nerves," the Frenchman said. "I was very relaxed and took all the risks. I had no problems at all."

Perhaps the most profound decision the 30-year-old veteran had to make on a course that provided little difficulty for the world's best downhillers was in selecting his start number.

Throughout training, the course ran faster for later starters and Alphand, as the top-ranked racer, got to choose first. So what was his masterful strategy?

"Seven is my favourite number and I knew I wanted a position in the 20s, so I picked 27," he grinned.

He said he felt some pressure to defend the number one ranking he earned last season, but more to do well as a representative of the French team.

France's Luc Alphand enjoys a ride on the shoulders of his coaches following his victory in the men's World Cup downhill in Vail, Colorado (Reuters photo)

"Skiing doesn't get much attention in France. There are few journalists here and no TV. I want to do well so people will notice the team."

For Kjus, the outcome was bittersweet — bitter because it marked the eighth time, fourth this season, he has finished second and missed his first World Cup win, and sweet since he continues to pile up points toward a possible overall title.

Kjus, who is proficient in all four disciplines, now has 365 points.

"I didn't believe I could make a start like this," he said of a World Cup beginning that has seen him finish runner-up three times in giant slalom and race swiftly in slalom as well. "It's a dream come true."

Kjus was particularly pleased that he was in top form for the first speed event of the year, an indication his repertoire is complete.

If there was any disappointment on the podium, it came from Ortlieb, the 1992 Olympic champion. Aided by fast skis, he was impeccable on the flat section on the upper course, a full seven-tenths of a second faster than Alphand.

But a series of mistakes caused him to squander it all the way down the hill.

U.S. lead 2-1 in Davis Cup

MOSCOW (R) — Pete Sampras and Todd Martin gave the United States a 2-1 lead in the Davis Cup final on Saturday when they thrashed Russia's Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Andrei Olkhovsky 7-5, 6-4, 6-3 in the doubles.

Sampras, who was carried off court with severe cramp after he beat Andrei Chesnokov in a five-set match on Friday, showed no sign of injury and served several aces.

At 4-4 in the second set with Martin serving, the Russians squandered two break points. With Olkhovsky serving to stay in the set and 40-15 ahead, Kafelnikov netted a backhand return. The Americans took the set 6-4.

The Russians quickly collapsed to 5-1 down in the third set, which they eventually lost 6-3. The match, played before a fiercely partisan crowd, took less than two hours.

The 21-year-old Kafelnikov, the golden boy of Russian tennis and ranked sixth in the world, walked despondently from the court at the end.

Arab Clubs Championship

Wihdat lose opening match

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Kingdom's soccer champions Al Wihdat Saturday lost 1-0 to Algeria's Bluzdad in their first match at the 11th Arab Clubs Soccer Championship held in the Saudi capital Riyadh.

The holders of the Kingdom's 1994 Premier League title will next face Kuwait's Kathma on Monday.

Hosted by Al Nasr Club of Riyadh, the competition groups 10 top teams divided into two groups.

Group A includes Algeria's Bluzdad, Kuwait's Kathma, Yemen's Al Wihdeh, hosts Al Nasr in addition to Al Wihdat.

Group B includes Al Hilal of Saudi Arabia, Tunisia's Al Tarajji, Bahrain's Rifa' Maghrebi, Sudan's Al Hilal and Palestine's Jabal Al Mukabber.

The Palestinian team was a late replacement in the group after Syria's Al Horrieh announced their withdrawal.

Only the top two teams in each group will advance to the semifinal round.

In other matches, Saudi Arabia's Al Hilal beat Al Rifa'i Al Maghrebi of Bahrain 2-0, Kuwait's Kathma overwhelmed Yemen's Al Wihdeh 4-1, Tunisia's Tarajji beat Al Hilal of Sudan 1-0, while Bluzdad upset Al Nasr 1-0 in the opening match of the tournament.

Al Wihdat's delegation includes 22 players: Yousef Al Ammouri, Nasr Ghandour, Jihad Abdul Mune'm, Isam Mahmoud, Abdallah Abu Zane'h, Faisal Ibrahim, Samer Bahlouz, Sufyan Abdallah, Jamal Mahmoud, Munir Abu Hantash, Marwan Al Shamali, Khaled Al Majdalawi, Othman Barhoumeh, Adnan Al Tawil, Walid Mikha'il, Ra'fat Ali, Yaser Abu Johar, Mohammad Afif, Shaher Hamdan, Mohammad Al Hawi and Hisham Abdul Min'em.

Schedule of Wihdat's matches

Monday 4/12 ..... Wihdat-Kathma
Wednesday 6/12 ..... Wihdat-Wihdeh
Friday 8/12 ..... Wihdat-Nasr

Skuhravy to move to Sporting Lisbon

GENOA (R) — Italian second division Genoa have agreed to loan Czech striker Tomas Skuhravy to Portugal's Sporting Lisbon for the rest of the season.

"I love Tomas like a son, maybe we can talk the end of the season to see if he could return to being useful for us in Serie A," Genoa President Aldo Spinelli was quoted as saying in Saturday's Gazzetta Dello Sport.

The daily said the clubs were due to sign the deal this weekend, adding that the agreement would give Sporting the right to buy Skuhravy outright at the end of the season.

The powerful Czech, who scored 58 goals in five Serie A seasons with Genoa, has been off form in his few appearances for the club in the second division this season.

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U.S. gives Solana resounding okay as chief of NATO

MADRID (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on Saturday hailed the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation's (NATO) next secretary-general, Spanish Foreign Minister Javier Solana, as the strong leader the alliance needs as it embarks on a risky mission in Bosnia.

Mr. Christopher became the first NATO foreign minister to meet Mr. Solana since alliance ambassadors selected him on Friday after weeks of disagreement over who should replace Belgian Willy Claes, who resigned in October over a bribery scandal.

With Mr. Solana standing beside him, Mr. Christopher told a news conference that President Bill Clinton and he were confident that the Spaniard "would be a strong leader for NATO in one of the most important and difficult periods of its time."

"I believe the personal qualities that we have sensed in him of strength, of high ability, of ability to bring people together, but also to show leadership — that was at rock bottom, I think, what motivated us most," he said.

Mr. Christopher flew into Madrid for the launch on Sunday of a "new transatlantic agenda" between the United States and the European Union (EU), aimed at boosting their political and economic ties. It will be signed for the United States by Mr. Clinton, who was due in the Spanish capital later on Saturday.

Spain currently holds the rotating presidency of the 15-nation (EU).

The secretary of state and Mr. Solana, who is due to be formally appointed to the NATO post next week, held an hour of talks along with U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor.

Mr. Solana emerged as a compromise candidate after Washington vetoed former Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, favoured by some European countries, and France made clear it would not accept former Danish Foreign Minister Uffe Ellemman-Jensen.

Mr. Christopher's strong endorsement of Mr. Solana came despite opposition by key U.S. congressmen who in a letter to Mr. Clinton on Friday called the Spaniard "a dedicated socialist with an extensive public record in opposition to NATO."

Mr. Christopher said Mr. Solana, his "colleague and friend," had led Spain in giving support to other NATO nations by supplying ground troops and aircraft for operations in Bosnia.

The "outstanding choice" of Mr. Solana was not just a tribute to him but "a compliment to the road Spain has travelled," he said. Spain only joined NATO in 1986 and is not a member of its integrated military command.

Mr. Solana will take over the helm at NATO just as the alliance sends 60,000 troops, including 20,000 Americans, to the Balkan state to implement a peace agreement reached last month in Dayton, Ohio.

"An enormous task remain ahead of us," Mr. Solana told the news conference. "We face the task of implementing the peace process and we also face the the whole reconstruction effort (in Bosnia)."

He thanked Mr. Christopher for the trust Washington had placed in him, adding: "I am perfectly aware of the difficulties and challenges that the Atlantic alliance currently faces."

The transatlantic agenda to be signed on Sunday is aimed at pooling efforts to promote democracy around the world, combat crime and terrorism, and work towards reducing remaining trade barriers between Europe and North America.

But it falls well short of the transatlantic free trade area that some European countries have suggested.

Mr. Solana has said peace in Bosnia after 43 months of war, and the extension of the alliance to its one-time foes in Eastern Europe, represented his priorities as NATO chief.

In an editorial in the International Herald Tribune on Saturday, he noted that when Spain was planning its EU presidency, it set as one of its priorities to give fresh impetus to the transatlantic connection.

"There is no doubt about the pre-eminence of our defence commitments. But a sound transatlantic relationship must also be based on a real partnership in the many areas — political, economic, financial, scientific — which we have interests in common," he wrote.

Mr. Solana's appointment was cheered in Spain, with the conservative opposition Popular Party declaring that he deserved "the support of all Spaniards."

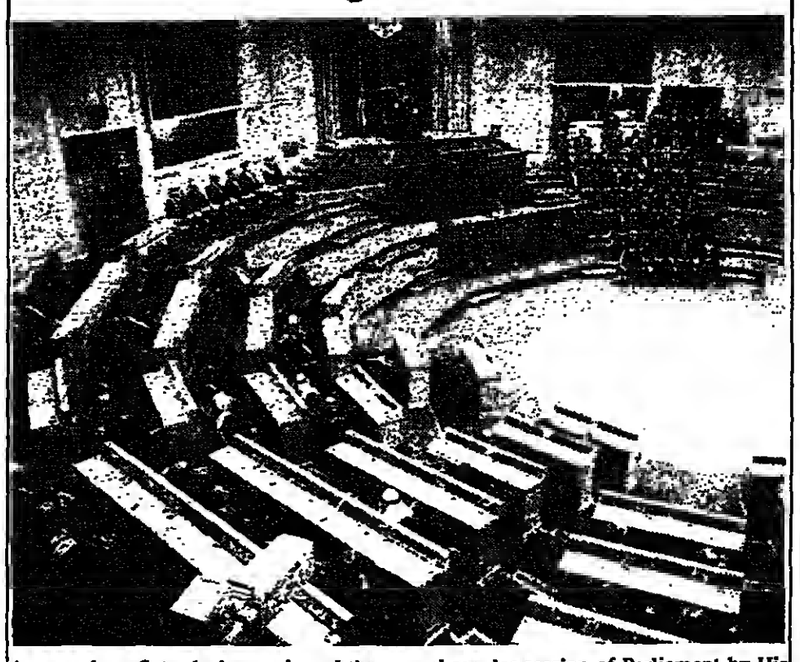
The El Mundo newspaper, however, recalled Mr. Solana's staunch opposition to NATO in the early 1980s, before the Spanish Workers' Socialist Party — to which he belongs — did a U-turn on the issue.

If someone had thought at the time that Mr. Solana would be NATO secretary-general, "he would have been put in an insane asylum," it said.

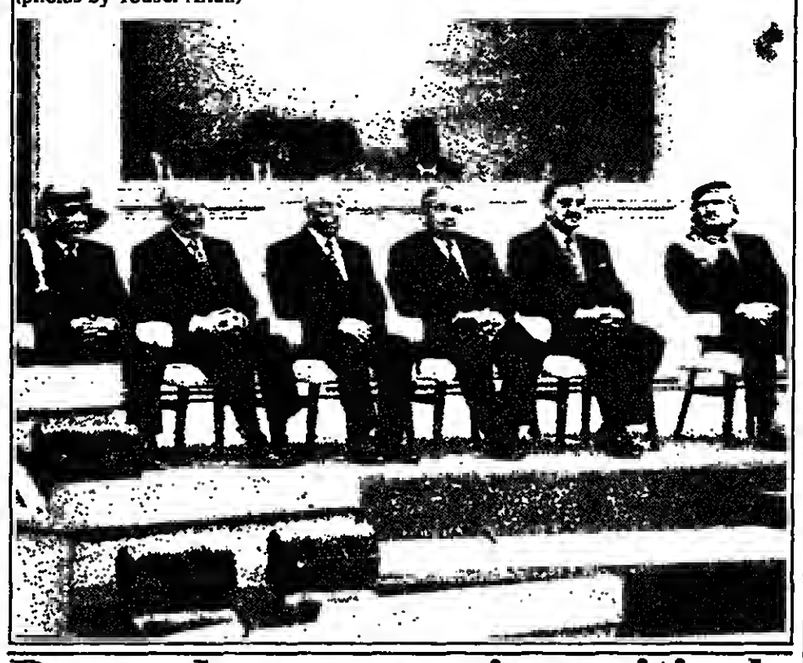
The summit agreement that Mr. Clinton will sign touches on trade barriers, terrorism, humanitarian aid, environment, organised crime, and the promotion of peace and democracy in regions such as Bosnia and the Middle East.

The meeting will include Jacques Santer, president of the European Commission, and Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez.

Parliament begins annual session



A scene from Saturday's opening of the annual regular session of Parliament by His Majesty King Hussein. (Below) His Royal Highness Cown Prince Hassan, Royal Court Chief Marwan Al Qasem and senior Royal Court officials attend the session (photos by Yousef Allan)



Papandreou remains critical; speculation rife on successor

ATHENS (R) — Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou looked set for a long stay in hospital on Saturday, raising the question of whether his Socialist party would move to choose a successor or resign itself to waiting.

A midday medical bulletin said Mr. Papandreou, 76, was in stable condition on life-support systems but noted a new tube had been inserted in his stomach for feeding.

Mr. Papandreou was taken to hospital 13 days ago with pneumonia and is now in critical condition, being kept alive with support systems for his kidney's and lungs.

Doctors have said his heart is working normally and he has suffered no brain damage so that there is a chance of recovery, although this would take a long time.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, doctors at the Onassis heart centre have said that, even if Mr. Papandreou is weaned from the life-support systems, he would need months to recover.

They have said it would be virtually impossible for him to carry out his official duties again in a normal way but no prominent socialist has been willing to come out publicly to start a leadership challenge.

This raises the question of how long the socialists can go on with a leader critically ill and heavily sedated in hospital.

Government spokesman Telemachos Hytiris insists that no one will replace Mr. Papandreou, who founded the Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) in 1974, and that until his recovery Interior Minister Akis Tsohatzopoulos would stand in for him.

But it is clear that intense power-brokering is going on around Athens with three principal candidates trying to line up votes among the socialist parliamentary deputies who would chose a new leader.

In the first opinion poll on the subject, published on Saturday, Defence Minister Gerassimos Arsenis was narrowly favoured to succeed Mr. Papandreou.

The private ICAP poll in the Athens area said 20.3 per cent of those asked opted for Mr. Arsenis, a U.S. educated economist, to take over the premiership.

Former Industry Minister Costas Simitis, a Pro-European economist, was favoured by 17.3 per cent, followed by Parliament President Apostolos Kaklamanis with 12.7 per cent.

Mr. Tsohatzopoulos, who will stand in for Mr. Papandreou at the European Union summit in Madrid in December, had 6.7 per cent.

But the biggest percentage of those polled, 23.5 per cent, said none of the above politicians should succeed Mr. Papandreou. Another 19.7 per cent did not answer.

Most political commentators have suggested that the race will narrow down to Mr. Arsenis and Mr. Simitis, with Mr. Tsohatzopoulos a possible third candidate.

Raising the succession issue publicly is dangerous for any socialist politician. Mr. Papandreou founded the party and broke the right's post-war grip on power in a landslide 1981 election win.

He is Greece's most charismatic post-war leader, commanding a large contingent of supporters who border on the fanatical. No socialist wants to be seen as the one who pushed Mr. Papandreou from the political scene against his will.

Opposition fails to win any seat in Egypt polls

CAIRO (R) — The ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) has won 124 out of 137 seats decided so far in parliamentary elections marred by violence and opposition cries of foul play, government newspapers reported on Saturday.

At least 13 people were killed in polling from Wednesday to Friday when preliminary results were announced, the daily Al Ahram quoted Interior Ministry sources as saying on Saturday.

Under the front-page headline "Victims of the thugs' elections," the opposition Al Wafd paper said 20 people died and 200 were injured in the violence.

"The hegemony of the NDP thugs has increased the number of victims," the paper said. "Egypt has never seen such bloody or violent elections such as these."

Opposition parties, which with one exception boycotted the last elections in 1990, failed to win a single seat so far, according to interior ministry figures.

Al Ahram said 124 NDP candidates and 13 independents had won seats at the end of counting in 222 constituencies, each of which sends two members to parliament.

A second round of voting in 174 constituencies where no clear winner emerged for either one or both seats contested will take place next Wednesday to decide who will take the remaining 307 seats in parliament.

But with only 41 opposition candidates left the NDP looks sure to maintain its hold over Egypt's legislative body with a sweeping majority.

Analysts have predicted that the NDP would win at least two-thirds of the seats in parliament, the figure needed to pass any legislation and to reelect the president.

Opposition parties have reported wide-scale abuses, from mass arrests of election agents to ballot box stuffing and violence and intimidation.

Al Ahram said three people were killed on Friday alone in violence related to the hotly contested polls. It said a woman was killed and four people were injured near Belyana town in the southern province of Sohag in fighting between supporters of rival candidates.

Police made 25 arrests in the Qaliubiya region, north of Cairo, after 18 people were wounded in fighting between supporters of an NDP candidate and an independent.

Seven policemen were among 14 more wounded in the same region when thousands of people protested over the defeat of their candidate. The demonstrators cut off the main Cairo to Alexandria road until police intervened with tear-gas.

Other protesters stoned a voting station in Gharbia, where seven people were wounded, while in the Nile Delta four policeman and another person were injured in clashes as demonstrators tried to set fire to a school used for polling.

COLUMN 8

Irish make Clinton a Freeman

DUBLIN (AP) — President Bill Clinton is a free man. The Irish said so. Mr. Clinton accepted a "Freedom of the City" parchment scroll Friday from Lord Mayor Sean D. Loftus during a rally outside the Bank of Ireland at College Green, once home to Ireland's House of Lords. "I am proud to say I am now a Freeman of Dublin," Mr. Clinton said, reveling in an ebullient crowd he called a "wonderful sea of Irish faces on this beautiful Irish day." Status as a Freeman is now Dublin's highest honour for non-citizens, and it grants a few useful privileges that you just cannot buy. In medieval times, a Freeman had tax privileges and was entitled to protection of the city walls after sunset. Modern benefits are harder to define, but as a Freeman, Mr. Clinton would be entitled to first claim on a bed in the local poorhouse should he go broke. And when Freemen die, flags in Dublin are lowered to half-mast. Mr. Clinton said he understood that being a Freeman meant "you no longer have to pay tolls to the Vikings." "I'm going to try that on the internal revenue service when I get home. I hope it will work," Mr. Clinton said. Mr. Clinton is the 63rd person to receive the honour, first given in 1876.

Clinton downs ale, but only a half

DUBLIN (R) — Real Irishmen drink pints. But U.S. President Bill Clinton, who is proud of his Irish heritage, was tired and drank only a half. "It's all I can manage at the moment," Mr. Clinton told a reporter who informed him that genuine Irishmen prefer the large glass to the smaller version. Nor was it Guinness stout, probably Ireland's biggest export, after its people. It was a rival brand, Murphy's stout, a similarly dark and rich brew. The U.S. leader broke from a day of promoting peace and Irish-American links to drop in with a few members of Congress at a Dublin bar bearing the name of his Irish ancestors. Cassidy's, a quaint city centre bar, has no direct link to Mr. Clinton's forbears — his mother was called Virginia Cassidy-Kelly. But it was chosen for its proximity to Mr. Clinton's official itinerary and the family name link and was a welcome break after 36 hours of non-stop official business. Mr. Clinton was accompanied by members of the U.S. Congress including Christopher Dodd and U.S. Commerce Secretary Ron Brown. He was joined briefly by Hillary Rodham Clinton, who has also had a hectic schedule. But she did not sample the local brew. "No, they won't let me have any fun," she told reporters who asked what Irish drink she had tasted. "Bloody typical. The wife's sent home early and he stays on," said an Irishwoman outside the pub, one of hundreds who crushed the narrow street to catch a glimpse.

Man with weapons arrested near White House

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A man carrying a rifle, ammunition and a machete in the trunk of his car was arrested Friday as he drove on a street near the White House that was closed to unauthorised vehicles, police said. Melvin Doyle Glover, 63, followed a bus into the restricted area and later told authorities he did not realise it was off limits. A search of the vehicle turned up a .22 caliber long rifle, ammunition, a machette and a knife.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ciller launches poll campaign on Internet

ANKARA (R) — Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller has launched her campaign for her reelection on Dec. 24 on the Internet, the daily Hurriyet said on Saturday. It said Ms. Ciller's site on the Internet's World Wide Web gave brief information about Ms. Ciller and her True Path Party (DYP). The Internet page also provides users with Ms. Ciller's economic targets, the DYP data bank and political manifesto as well as a passport-size picture of Turkey's first woman premier.

Indian Airlines plane overshoots runway

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Passengers and crew on an Indian Airlines flight made a lucky escape with only four minor injuries Saturday after the plane lost its wheels on landing and overshoot the runway. The Boeing 737, with 102 passengers and four crew, was landing at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi airport when its main wheels came off on touch down causing the plane to overshoot the runway and crash into a field, smashing the nose and right wing and sparking a fire, witnesses and airport officials said. Fire engines and medical teams rushed to the aircraft as passengers were evacuated from emergency chutes, but found only four people slightly injured. "For a second we thought the plane had crashed and was going to explode because we saw a fire on its starboard wing," a fireman said. India's Civil Aviation Ministry ordered a full-scale investigation into the accident on the flight from Bombay, a government official said.

Swissair denies seat to Salman Rushdie

GENEVA (AFP) — British novelist Salman Rushdie, target of an assassination order from Iran's late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, was denied a seat on a Swissair flight to Zurich last month, a Swiss newspaper reported Saturday. La Tribune de Geneve, citing unidentified Swissair sources, said the airline felt that carrying the author of "The Satanic Verses" would endanger the lives of other passengers. A Swissair spokesman, contacted Saturday, said he was unaware of the incident and that it would not be possible to verify the report over the weekend. Mr. Rushdie, who lives in London, was invited by Swiss author Adolf Muschg to attend the Nov. 14 conference in Zurich. He was also to see Swiss Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti and Interior Minister Ruth Dreifuss during the trip. Mr. Muschg told the newspaper that Switzerland had offered a private aircraft for Mr. Rushdie to travel on, but the author turned it down. "He refuses to accept conditions that are imposed on him as a result of those who want kill him," Mr. Muschg said.

100 died from AIDS in Iran since 1985

TEHRAN (AFP) — One hundred people have died from AIDS in Iran in the past 11 years and 211 others are infected with the virus, Health Minister Alireza Marandi said Saturday. Mr. Marandi, cited by the official IRNA news agency, said 175 of those exposed to the AIDS virus had contracted it through blood transfusion, 11 through drugs injection and 106 through sexual encounters. The origins of the 19 other cases were not given in the report to mark World AIDS Day. The first case of AIDS in Iran was discovered in 1985 — a one-year-old baby who had contracted the disease through a transfusion of contaminated imported blood. The authorities launched an AIDS awareness campaign five years ago to fight the disease, encouraging those infected with the virus to seek help. The Health Ministry has urged dentists, clinics, medical laboratories and barber's shops to conform to health standards. It also proposed marriage at an early age and faithfulness.

Somalia militia battles kill 9

MOGADISHU (R) — Fifteen people were killed and many wounded in a flare-up of inter-clan fighting near the war-battered Somali capital of Mogadishu, witnesses said on Saturday.

The fighting erupted between rival militiamen loyal to the Murusadeh and Abgal clans in Tihsile village 60 kilometres west of Mogadishu on Friday, witnesses told Reuters.

Militiamen armed with automatic rifles, machineguns and recoilless rifles and fighters in "technical" battlewagons fought fierce battles for most of the day, they said.

In a broadcast on Saturday, a south Mogadishu Radio station which supports faction leader Osman Ali Hassan Ato blamed forces loyal to his bitter rival, Mohammad Farah Aideed, for starting the violence "for no concrete reason."

Witnesses said several homes were burned down, forcing dozens of Somali families to flee.

They said 15 people were killed and many were wounded in the fighting.

The pro-Atto radio said eight people had been killed in the firefight.

General Aideed and Mr. Atto, his former financier who broke away in March, control different parts of south Mogadishu.

Last June supporters of Gen. Aideed named him as president of the Horn of Africa country which has been devastated by famine and fighting between rival clans since President Mohammd Siad Barre was overthrown in 1991.

Radio Aideed, also broadcasting from south Mogadishu, warned a senior European envoy on Saturday that his security could not be guaranteed in any part of the country.

It said Sigurd Illing, the European Commission envoy for Somalia, had "violated immigration rules for foreigners."

Amnesty back in Morocco after 1990 expulsion

RABAT (R) — Human rights group Amnesty International on Saturday opened a two-day human rights workshop in Morocco, where it was thrown out five years ago.

"We are aware of the positive steps Morocco has taken to improve human rights and we hope these will continue to treat the remaining human rights issues of concern to Amnesty," said June Ray, Amnesty's programme director for the Middle East.

Mr. Ray was among an Amnesty group which was "asked to leave" by the government while on a mission to Morocco in 1990.

Human Rights Minister Mohammad Ziane, who attended the seminar along with Education Minister Rachid Ben Mukhtar, said the 1990 incident happened "in the old Morocco" before respect for human rights became enshrined in the constitution.

Mr. Ziane, in his opening remarks, admitted Morocco's relationship with Amnesty International had not been easy and acknowledged that the group's local representatives had not yet been authorised to operate although they were tolerated.

He also referred to a dispute with Amnesty over the group's refusal to cede to Moroccan demands to stop including information in its reports obtained from the Polisario Front, which fought Morocco over the Western Sahara.

In its 1995 report, the London-based group criticised the detention of 50 political prisoners although it welcomed the release of more than 350 prisoners under a royal pardon.

Amnesty said earlier that the initiative, the first of its kind in North Africa, was taken in the light of "positive steps" which Morocco had taken to promote respect for human rights.

King Hassan amnested more than 400 political prisoners in 1994 in an attempt to improve Morocco's image abroad.

But Amnesty said in its report that it was still concerned by continued torture and ill-treatment of detainees being held "in communicado," the reported deaths of four people in custody and the case of 300 "disappeared" in the Western Sahara.

Mr. Ziane and Mr. Ben Mukhtar announced a joint plan under which human rights education would be part of the national curriculum in schools and colleges by 1998 after an experimental period.

"It is the duty of schools to teach respect for the rights of the handicapped, equality of the sexes and the rights of women as a way to social progress," Mr. Ben Mukhtar said.

"Teaching human rights in schools will help the child face pressures at home, where he is subjected to corporal punishment and mental cruelty and where he is deprived of education and exploited for financial gain," he told the seminar.

Among those invited to attend the opening session were a group of women from the Western Sahara conspicuous in their colourful long robes silently watching the film which explained the Universal Human Rights Declaration in animated form.

They said they came to seek help in securing the return of children and relatives, who disappeared during the fighting between the Polisario and Morocco over the Western Sahara.

A woman who identified herself as Zeida said Cubans who fought with the Polisario took her four-year old daughter Ghalli and she had since received word her daughter was in Cuba.

"My daughter is now 17 and I have not seen her since the Cubans took her. I believe she is on an island and all I have had from her is a letter smuggled to her aunt in Spain begging us to take her out of that strange land," she said.